26 Magdalo recruits to tag Honasan, says Lina

Story on PAGE A2

NBI clears Mike A: He's not 'Jose Pidal'

By Leila B. Salaverria, *Metro*

AFTER the Philippine National Police, comes now the National Bureau of Investigation saying the signatures of First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo and of 'Jose Pidal" are not the same.

Eliodoro Constantino, chief of the NBI Questioned Documents Division and a

NBI/A18

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Ping loses star witness

Mike A, Vicky Toh lovers, says Mahusay

By Christine O. Avendaño

FIRST Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo and his personal accountant Victoria Toh were more than wine lovers.

"She is the mistress of Atty. Jose Miguel Arroyo," Eugenio Mahusay Jr. said of Toh in his affidavit.

Toh, who is on vacation in Canada, earlier denied any romantic involvement with Arroyo.

Mahusay said he would serve red wine to Arroyo and Toh in the First Gentleman's room at the LTA Building in Makati at around 10 p.m., especially when President Macapagal-Arroyo was out of town.

The camp of Sen. Panfilo Lacson released the affidavit to the media yesterday after the senator's star witness against Arroyo was allegedly "abducted" by Malacañang.

"This affidavit was the reason why these agents of (the First Gentleman) wanted to be able to get Eugenio Mahusay Jr.," Lacson's spokesperson, Lito Banayo, said at a news conference three hours after Mahusay's "abduction" in a safe house provided by the senator in Tagaytay City.

Aside from attending to the personal needs of Arroyo such as letting him drink his medicine, cooking his favorite dish (fried *galunggong)* and *pinakbet*, Mahusay said he would also buy flowers for Toh every Valentine's Day.

"I was also asked to join Arroyo and Toh in going around Tagaytay on board a yellow helicopter

MIKE/A19

HOUSING chief Mike Defensor presents whistle-blower Eugenio Mahusay, third from left, in a press conference at the police academy in Silang, Cavite. Beside Mahusay are his wife and daughter and at the other end his brothers Jojo and Ferdinand.

EDWIN BACASMAS

THE SMALL Tagaytay City hotel used by Sen. Panfilo Lacson as a safe house for his prized witness, Eugenio Mahusay.

ERIK ARAZAS

Mahusays happy but anxious storm ain't over

By Alcuin Papa and Michael Lim Ubac

HIS happiness is tinged with anxiety.

Having been reunited with his younger brother Eugenio (or "Udong") who left home two months ago, Ferdinand Mahusay said yesterday: "I'm happy we are together again and Udong is with his wife and child again."

But Ferdinand is plagued with the distinct feeling that the storm is not over yet for their family.

"We are a little confused now

MAHUSAYS/A18

Mahusay: Rescued or abducted in Tagaytay?

By Juliet Labog-Javellana Michael Lim Ubac and Christian V. Esguerra

RELATIVES of Eugenio Mahusay Jr. and a Cabinet member yesterday pulled a fast one on Sen. Panfilo Lacson when they "rescued" him from the senator's "safe house" in Tagaytay City yesterday.

But Lacson said Mahusay, his principal witness against First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo's "money laundering" activities, was "abducted" to suppress the truth.

Mahusay claimed at a press briefing on Monday that he personally witnessed Arroyo, his wedding godfather and former employer, sign as Jose Pidal in bank accounts in which the First Gentleman allegedly kept millions in unspent campaign contributions to his wife.

"The attack dogs were unleashed against me," Lacson said, adding that "the truth will always come out."

At about 10:30 a.m., SPO2 Jojo Mahusay barged into Room 203 of Milestone Hotel and took his brother despite the presence of armed men guarding Lacson's witness.

It was Mike Defensor, chair of the Housing and Urban Development Coordinating Council, who drove the wife of Mahusay, 7-year-old daughter, and brothers Ferdinand and Jojo to the hotel.

Defensor said Malacañang had nothing to do with the rescue, saying he only called up President Macapagal-Arroyo when Mahusay, his wife, daughter and brothers were already on their way to the Philippine National Police Academy at Camp Castañeda in Silang, Cavite.

He informed Ms Macapagal that he had to take Mahusay, his wife, daughter and brothers to the camp for security reasons. "I told her, Madam President, Udong (Mahusay) is with me," Defensor recalled.

"Thank God, thank God. Are you safe?" Defensor quoted the

PING/A18

Solon says Union Bank can identify 'Jose Pidal'

By Carlito Pablo

MORE than anyone else, it is the Union Bank's branch in Perea Street, Makati, that can identify the real owner of the 'Jose Pidal" account claimed by Sen. Panfilo Lacson to be a dummy account of President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband.

Rep. Oscar Moreno (Lakas, Misamis Oriental) yesterday pointed this out, partly from his experience as one of the 11 congressmen-prosecutors at the impeachment trial of President Joseph Estrada, who was accused of, among others, ownership of the "Jose Velarde" account at the Equitable PCIBank.

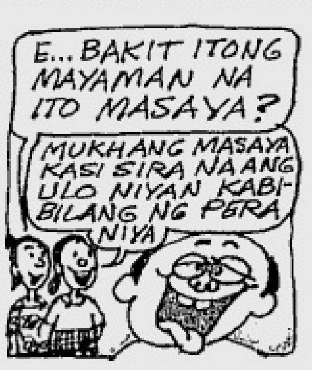
Moreno, chair of the House committee on economic affairs, said that even if a bank had allowed the opening of an account under a fictitious name, "there is a document or written agreement that points to the real ownership of the account."

"There has to be a way of identifying the real owner," he said.

Commenting on Lacson's allegation that Pidal and the President's husband, Jose Miguel Arroyo, shared not only a mailing address at the 8th floor of the LTA Building in Makati but also a financial adviser, Moreno said it was a "disturbing" coincidence.

He said Lacson must present evidence to substantiate the alle-

SOLON/A18



E... BAKIT ITONG MAYAMAN NA ITO MASAYA?
MUKHANG MASAYA KASI SIRA NA ANG ULO NIYAN KABIBILANG NG PERA NIYA

Can you buy happiness? Yes and no

LOS ANGELES—The Beatles said it, so did Cuban singer Silvio Rodriguez: Money can't buy happiness, a fact confirmed in a scientific study by the University of Southern California.

What's more, people don't get happier by getting

CAN/A17

GMA blames politics, coup try for continuing slump of peso

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday blamed "creeping negativism," partisan politics and coup attempts for the continued weakness of the peso, which slumped to 55.60 to the US dollar in Tuesday's trading.

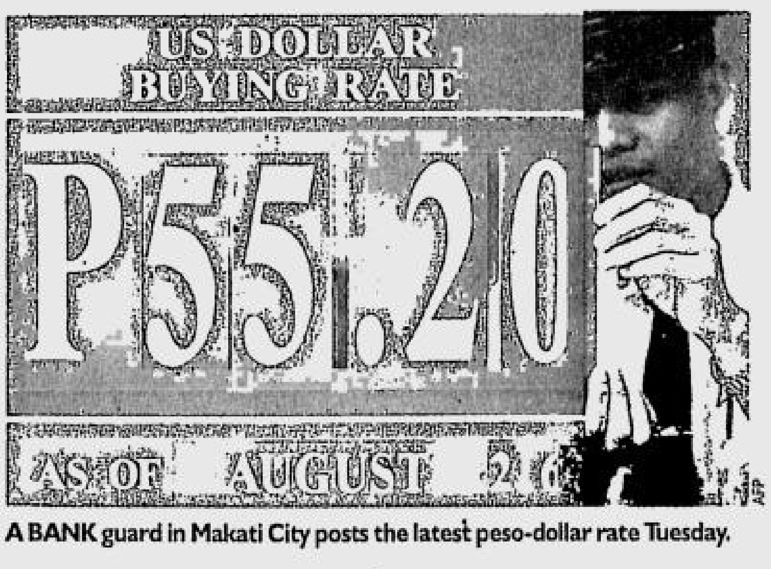
The peso, however, closed at 55.45 to the greenback on the Philippine Dealing System, down from 55.42 Monday. Volume rose to $117.5 million from $113 million Monday.

"The unfortunate brew of destabilization and partisan politics has affected the performance of our peso," Ms Macapagal said in a statement as the local currency depreciated for the fifth consecutive session.

"Much is being done to achieve normalcy and consolidate our gains in law and order but more can be gained if our institutions close ranks behind a serious drive for productivity, reforms and stability."

Ms Macapagal urged the public to shun "creeping negativism" and shake off domestic concerns, even as she stressed her administration was working to imple-

GMA BLAMES/A17



A BANK guard in Makati City posts the latest peso-dollar rate Tuesday.

GMA may reconsider pledge to skip '04—Bunye

By Ronnie Lorejo
PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

THE SPOKESPERSON of President Macapagal-Arroyo yesterday suggested for the first time that she might reconsider an earlier pledge not to run in next year's presidential election.

Administration party leaders in Bicol also want Ms Macapagal to announce her final decision soon so they could decide whether to support her or their fellow Bicolano, former Education Secretary Raul Roco.

"The President acknowledges the fact that many of (the members of her party) including former President Fidel Ramos are really urging her to run," presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said over ABS-CBN television.

"But the President has not given any indication either way what her final answer will be. I'm sure that if she does decide, I would be among the first to know."

In Legazpi City, former Justice Secretary Hernando Perez reiterated before restive administration party members that the President would run in 2004.

"*Maniwala kayo sa 'kin na si*

GMA MAY/A17

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers and thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

COMPILED BY: RAY LEYESA, PDI RESEARCH/08/27/03

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	Iloilo/Bacolod	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Partly Cloudy	Roxas	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Partly Cloudy	Cebu	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Partly Cloudy	Tacloban	Cloudy with Rains
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	Gen. Santos	Cloudy with Rains
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	Zamboanga	Cloudy with Rains
Legazpi	Cloudy with Rains	Cagayan de Oro	Cloudy with Rains
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	Davao	Cloudy with Rains

26 Magdalo recruits to tag Gringo, says Lina

By Volt Contreras

TWENTY-SIX more military officers bearing the scars of Magdalo blood compacts allegedly presided over by Sen. Gregorio Honasan have come forward to bolster the government's case against the fugitive lawmaker, Interior Secretary Jose Lina revealed yesterday.

The 26 new witnesses were among the "recruits" of the July 27 mutineers, Lina said, but were not part of the group that occupied the Oakwood apartment-hotel in Makati City.

"They said in their affidavits that Sen. Honasan himself demonstrated how to make a cut on the lower portion of the left arm," Lina told reporters after giving his testimony before the Feliciano Commission.

Lina turned over the affidavits of the soldiers to the six-member fact-finding body. He declined to give copies to the media or disclose the witnesses' names. But in a later interview, he said they were young officers from different services of the Armed Forces. He also said the 26 were "under the custody of their respective superiors."

The officers "voluntarily" executed their affidavits, Lina stressed. They said the meetings they attended had taken place months before the June 4, 2003 blood compact recounted by an earlier government witness.

Rep. Prospero Pichay announced also yesterday that two more soldiers with the rank of captain were set to testify before a House committee that Honasan personally handed them the knife during a blood-letting session prior to the Oakwood mutiny.

ENLISTED MEN attend the pre-trial at JAGO in Camp Aguinaldo for their alleged participation in the Oakwood mutiny.

JOAN BONDOC

Pichay, chair of the committee on national defense, said the two did not join the group in Makati. He said the captains were under the protective custody of the Intelligence Service of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. He said the committee would wrap up its investigation after hearing the testimonies of the two captains.

Military officials clarified yesterday that some of the 30 officers cleared by President Macapagal-Arroyo had taken part in a blood compact but did not participate in the July 27 incident.

On Monday, the President ordered the release of the 13 Navy senior grades, 14 Navy ensigns, two Army first lieutenants and one Marine major, saying they had been misled or coerced into joining the mutiny.

At the resumption of the military's pre-trial investigation yesterday, 37 enlisted personnel from the Army also said they had been misled into joining the mutiny.

The 37 officers received copies of the charge sheets against them in the presence of two lawyers from the Free Legal Assistance Group. They were given 10 days to file counter-affidavits. A total of 326 soldiers remain in detention. *With Cynhtia D. Balana, TJ Burgonio, and a report from AFP*

DOJ to Gringo: Show up or see you in court

By Philip C. Tubeza

SEN. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan should show up today for the preliminary investigation on the coup d'état case against him, or the charges would be "considered submitted for resolution."

The Department of Justice issued this warning yesterday even as it issued subpoenas for 342 participants in the July 27 mutiny.

"(Honasan) has to submit his counter-affidavit. It's not the presence of the counsels that we need, but that of the respondents," Justice Undersecretary Jose Calida said.

If the senator fails to show up, the case will be resolved based only on the police complaint, according to Calida.

Charged along with Honasan were Capt. Felix Turingan, Honasan's staff member George Duldulao, retired Col. Ernesto Macahiya of Bay, Laguna, a Col. Briones, a retired Col. Lazo, one Lina Reyes, and 1,000 John and Jane Does, most of them members of the Philippine Guardians Brotherhood Inc.

Government witnesses allegedly saw Honasan lead several blood compacts with the mutineers by way of sealing a plot to overthrow the government.

Lawyer Daniel Gutierrez, Honasan's counsel, earlier said his client would not surface because of threats that he would be arrested.

Meanwhile, the DOJ issued subpoenas against Lt. (s.g.) Antonio Trillanes IV and 341 other mutineers who are also facing coup d'état charges.

The subpoenas were for 86 officers and enlisted personnel from the Navy, 99 from the Marines, 145 from the Army, and 12 officers from the Air Force. They were ordered to submit counter-affidavits and other supporting documents on or before Sept. 5, when the panel of prosecutors are set to conduct the first hearing for the preliminary investigation.

The DOJ earlier filed the coup d'état charges against the rebel soldiers before the Makati Regional Trial Court. But on Aug. 13, the Makati court threw back the case to the DOJ.

NPC solons urge Gloria to dance the Cha-cha

CONGRESSMEN belonging to the Nationalist People's Coalition of businessman Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. yesterday called on President Macapagal-Arroyo to "publicly endorse" Charter change now.

They said that constitutional reform, particularly a shift to a parliamentary system before the 2004 elections, would stabilize the political situation in the wake of the July 27 failed coup.

"The only practical and most logical solution to defuse the current political instability and mudslinging is to change the form of government," the NPC congressmen said in a statement.

NPC Rep. Alfredo Maranon Jr. said that a parliamentary system would do away with coups and other forms of military intervention as a vote of no-confidence in parliament would be enough to kick out a non-performing government. *Carlito Pablo*

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Dual citizenship bill ratified

By Carlito Pablo

THE HOUSE of Representatives last night ratified the landmark Citizenship Retention and Reacquisition Act of 2003, paving the way for its signing into law by President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The House vote came a day after the Senate approved the measure that seeks to allow Filipinos abroad to reacquire their natural-born citizenship while maintaining their adopted foreign citizenship status.

Speaker Jose de Venecia said that the passage of the bill will generate at least $10 billion in new investments in housing and real estate from Filipinos living in the United States, Canada and Australia.

"We will see about a million Filipinos coming back to invest in housing and real estate," De Venecia said, noting that this would help revive the economy.

De Venecia said that Ms Macapagal had assured him that she would sign the bill into law within 48 hours after Malacañang receives a copy of the ratified bill.

The opposition, however, has vowed that it would question the dual citizenship law before the Supreme Court on constitutional grounds.

Opposition Rep. Ronaldo Zamora said the Constitution provides that "dual allegiance is inimical to national interest" and as such "serious constitutional questions remain."

Another opposition congressman, Rep. Didagen Dilangalen, questioned whether a person who has reacquired Filipino citizenship could be considered a natural-born citizen again, and therefore qualify to run for elective office.

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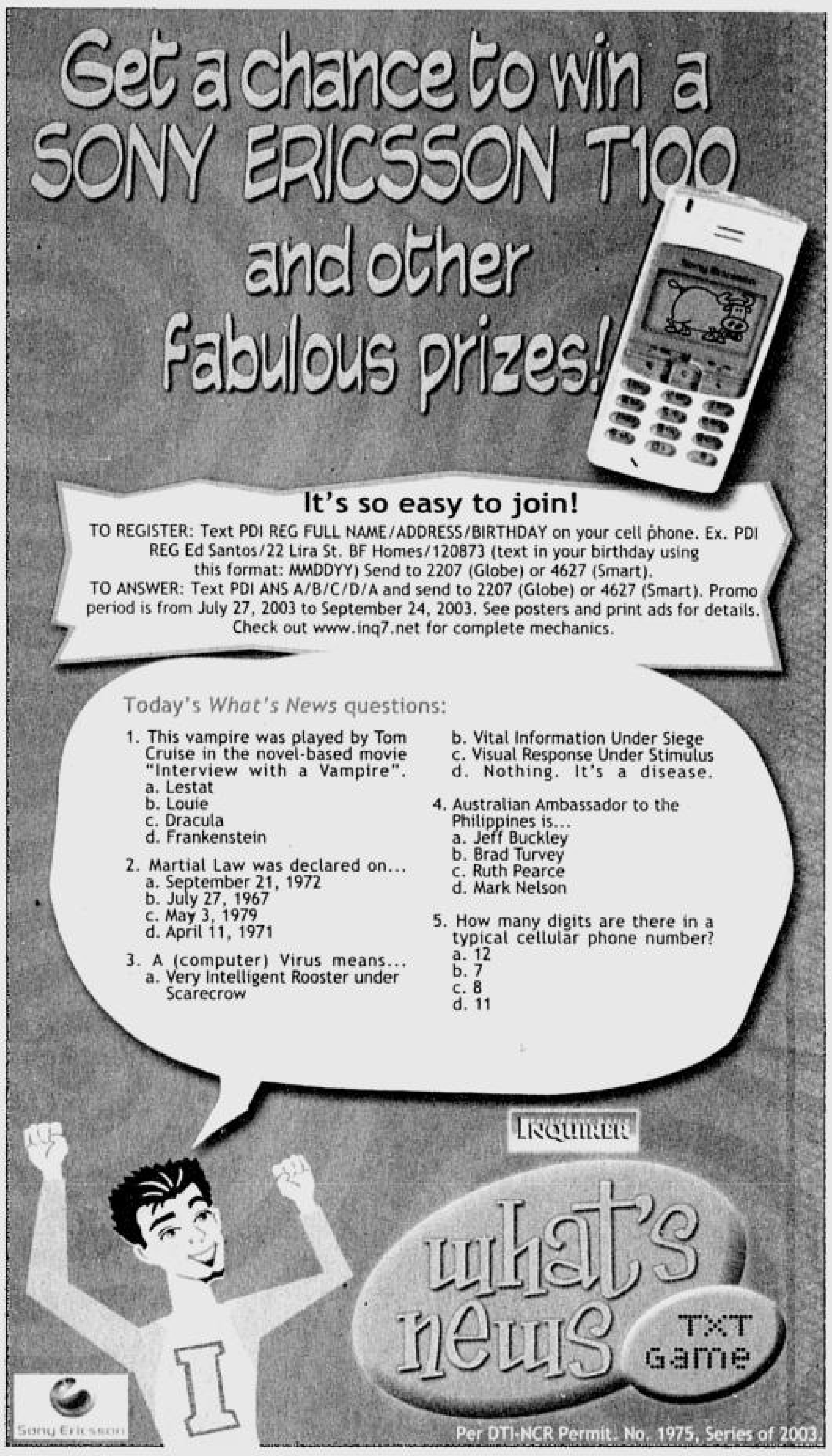
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Today's *What's News* questions:
1. This vampire was played by Tom Cruise in the novel-based movie "Interview with a Vampire".
a. Lestat
b. Louie
c. Dracula
d. Frankenstein
2. Martial Law was declared on...
a. September 21, 1972
b. July 27, 1967
c. May 3, 1979
d. April 11, 1971
3. A (computer) Virus means...
a. Very Intelligent Rooster under Scarecrow
b. Vital Information Under Siege
c. Visual Response Under Stimulus
d. Nothing. It's a disease.
4. Australian Ambassador to the Philippines is...
a. Jeff Buckley
b. Brad Turvey
c. Ruth Pearce
d. Mark Nelson
5. How many digits are there in a typical cellular phone number?
a. 12
b. 7
c. 8
d. 11
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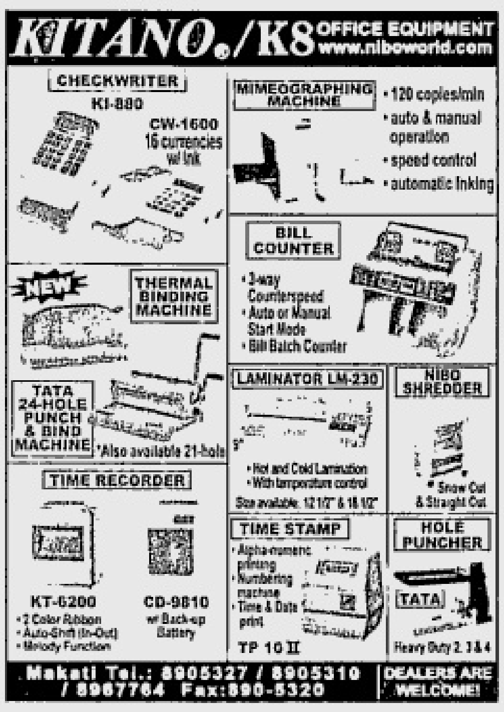

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Customs men start protests

By Martin P. Marfil Armand Nocum and Gil Cabacungan

EMPLOYEES at the Bureau of Customs started the first of a planned series of daily protest actions against the controversial lifestyle checks even as President Macapagal-Arroyo said the government's anti-corruption drive should not be a divisive issue as it would be applied to everyone including the people close to her and around her.

But the Office of the Ombudsman yesterday warned grafters in government they cannot have their cake and eat it too.

To make graft less attractive to officeholders, the Ombudsman's office said it was going to focus on the next phase of the anti-corruption campaign—the forfeiture of properties and assets illegally acquired by corrupt officials.

Special Prosecutor Dennis Villa-Ignacio said the Ombudsman's office would this time work hard not only to convict grafters but see to it that their properties are put up for "public sale" with the "proceeds going to the public coffers."

About 200 employees wearing red armbands and calling for the resignation of the President held a rally in front of Gate 3 at the South Harbor yesterday.

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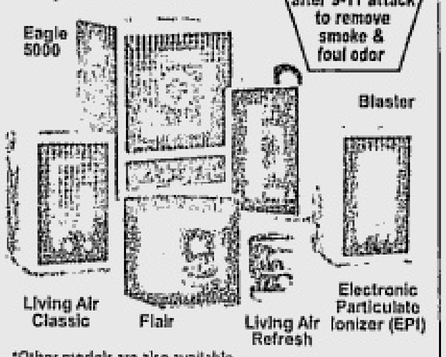

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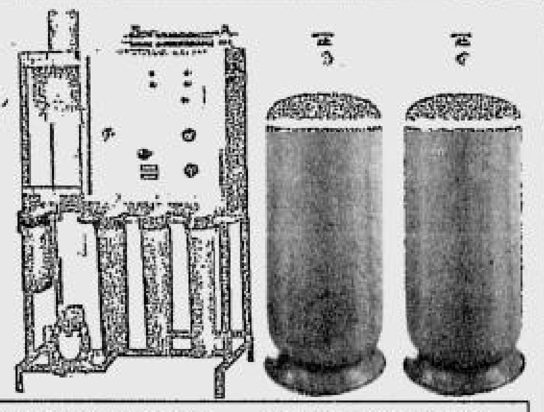

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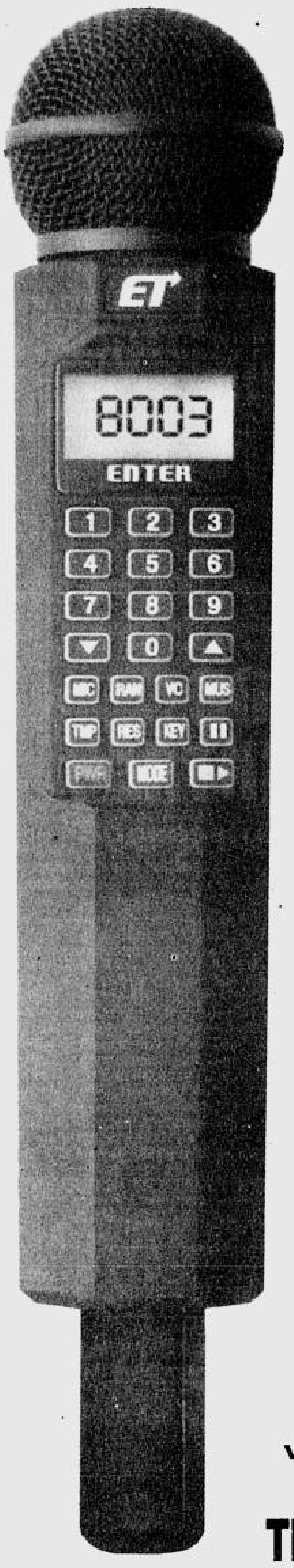

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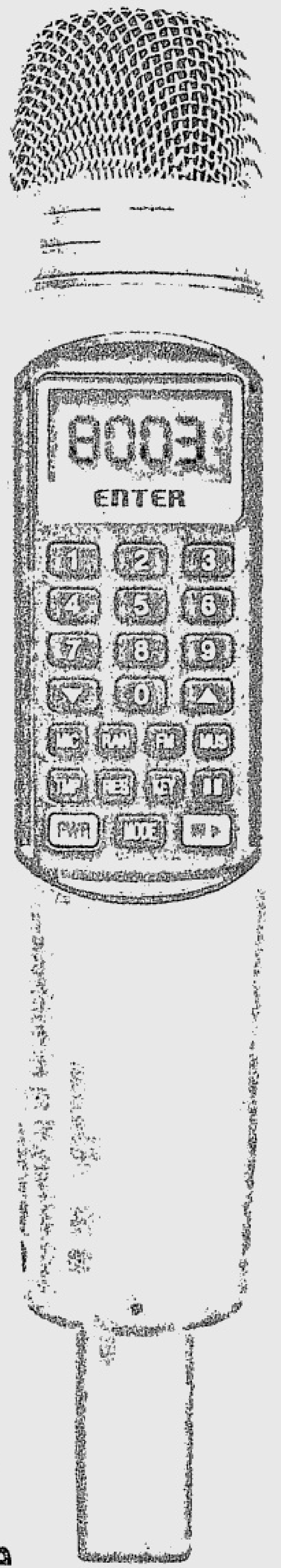

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RP family wins 60-day stay in deportation

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THE AGANDA'S of Selah, Washington. AP

SPOKANE, Washington—A federal judge has granted a 60-day stay in the deportation of a Filipino family, a day before the three were scheduled to leave the United States.

US District Judge Edward Shea issued the order after attorneys representing Judy Aganda argued her health would not permit her to be deported. She has been treated for brain cancer.

The order is the latest twist in a decade-long quest by Tomas and Judy Aganda and their daughter Jennylyn to remain in the United States.

"We had a victory today," State Rep. Jim Clements said by telephone after the ruling.

The stay allows supporters of the Agandas to regroup, Clements said.

One-way ticket home

Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement spokesperson Garrison Courtney was unavailable for comment after normal business hours Monday. The Agandas' lawyer, Jeff Webster, did not immediately return a call for comment Monday afternoon.

Tomas, 55; Judy, 48; and Jennylyn, 15, surrendered their passports in Seattle last Monday after the 9th US Circuit Court of Appeals ruled against them. They had purchased one-way tickets to the Philippines.

Three other children in the family do not face deportation. Herbie, 23, and Khimson, 21, have student visas, while Stephanie, 19, was born in this country and is a US citizen.

The Agandas entered the country on tourist visas in 1990, opened a dry cleaning store in Selah, near Yakima, then sought to stay. Judy Aganda said they wanted to escape threats and extortion attempts from the New People's Army, a communist rebel group the United States listed last year as a terrorist organization.

The family filed for political asylum in 1993, but was denied and lost a subsequent appeal to the 9th Circuit in 2001. The appeals court recently denied a request for an extension, clearing the way for the family's deportation.

Supporters' pleas to allow the family to remain in the country for humanitarian reasons went all the way to the White House. Clements and Rep. Mary Skinner, another Yakima Republican, worked with the state's congressional delegation to try to block the Agandas' deportation.

Clements obtained an audience with an aide to President George W. Bush to talk about the case when the president visited the state last week, and more than 4,000 people signed petitions asking federal officials to grant a stay while Judy Aganda recovers. But the immigration bureau said it has proof that Judy Aganda's medical treatment could continue in the Philippines.

"She's not getting treatment for brain cancer any more. The mother merely requires MRI scans to determine whether the cancer has reappeared," Courtney said from the agency's headquarters in Washington, D.C., prior to Shea's ruling. "Her last treatment was in February. We've talked to the Public Health Service and oncologists and they say it's OK to move her."

Supporters contend Aganda's condition makes her susceptible to brain aneurisms during the high altitude flight to the Philippines. *AP*

Evidence vs Pinoy accused of killing family missing

SYDNEY, Australia—Prosecutors were missing "great swathes of evidence" in their case against a Filipino law student charged with stabbing his parents and sister to death, the man's lawyer said Monday.

Sef Gonzales, 22, was charged in June last year with the murders of his solicitor father, Teddy, 46, his mother Mary Loiva, 43, and his 18-year-old sister Clodine at the family's Sydney home in 2001.

He is alleged to have then daubed a racial slur on a wall of the family home to make the slayings appear racially motivated. A few days later, he made a tearful televised plea for help tracking down his family's killer.

A Sydney local court is conducting a preliminary hearing to determine whether there is enough evidence for Gonzales to be tried.

He has pleaded innocent. If he stands trial and is convicted, he faces life imprisonment.

On Monday, Gonzales lawyer Philip Massey told the hearing "there is great swathes of evidence that is just not in the brief," presented by the prosecution to the court.

He said the prosecution could not prove its claim Gonzales had tried to poison his mother only weeks before the stabbings.

Loiva Gonzales was hospitalized on July 3, 2001, suffering from "fever, severe abdominal pain and bloody diarrhea," according to prosecutor Mark Tedeschi.

Massey said the brief indicated a sample from the mother's stomach was sent to the FBI for analysis after she was admitted to the hospital, but the results were not there.

"Someone (at the FBI) looked at it but it was never returned," he said.

Prosecutors allege Gonzales was motivated by greed wanting to claim his parent's wealth after their deaths.

Massey said prosecutors had made this allegation without estimating its value.

"There is not a cracker of evidence of what is the value of the estate," he said. "It may be worth two cents for all we know."

Another court recently refused Gonzales' access to his family's estate which he wanted to pay for his legal fees. That court was told the estate in Australia was worth $780,000 ($1.2 million Australian dollars) and that the family also held considerable assets in the Philippines.

The committal hearing continues Tuesday. *AP*

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Dr. Eutrapio S. Guevara, Jr., is the Director of the Voice-Swallowing and Sinus Center, and concurrent Chairman of St. Luke's Department of Otorhinolaryngology- Head and Neck Surgery.

Dr. Guevara had fellowship training at UP-PGH; Roswell Park Memorial Institute, Buffalo, New York; St. George's Hospital, Royal Marsden Hospital, and Queen Mary's Hospital, Roehampton, London, England; Hospital Foch, Paris, France; University Hospital, Zurich, Switzerland; and University Hospital, Lausanne, Switzerland and Marianne Hospital, Stuttgart, Germany.

Dr. William L. Lim, Assistant Director of the Voice-Swallowing and Sinus Center, completed his fellowship training in Laryngology and Phoniatrics at the Department of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery, Kurume University Hospital, Kurume, Japan.

Dr. Benjamin S.A. Campomanes, Section Head of the Sinus Section of the Voice-Swallowing and Sinus Center, had post residency training at Royal Brompton & Charing Cross Hospital, London; University of Utrecht, the Netherlands; and University of Graz, Austria.

Dr. Rene S. Tuazon, Chief of the Laryngology Unit, specializes in the diagnosis and treatment of upper airway problems from the nose down to the bronchus. Postgraduate training includes Allergy in Otorhinolaryngology, University of Tokyo, Japan.

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PCGG eyes more Marcos accounts

By Dona Pazzibugan
and Philip C. Tubeza

THE GOVERNMENT is seeking the recovery of at least two substantial Marcos accounts in Swiss banks, belying the claim of the Swiss ambassador that there are no remaining accounts linked to the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos and his family outside of the $683 million ordered forfeited by the Supreme Court recently.

"There are two accounts traceable to the Marcoses that we're still following up," Presidential Commission on Good Government Commissioner Ruben Carranza told reporters yesterday.

He said one set of accounts is in the Geneva-based Lombard, Odier et Cie bank, under the names of the Gladiator Establishment, Mabari Establishment and Pretorian Foundation.

But Carranza said legal efforts to recover the accounts have been complicated by the fact that Swiss justice and financial officials operate out of Zurich while the bank is in Geneva.

The other set of accounts is in the name of the Liechtenstein-based Lalag Corp., or Galalsa AG, which had opened several accounts in various banks in Switzerland.

Carranza said Swiss authorities have re-imposed the "freeze order" on these accounts that it had imposed in 1986 but which the Marcos heirs had succeeded in getting the authorities to lift.

"We want to know what happened to them as fast as we can," Carranza said.

He could not say how much the accounts contained now as the figures fluctuate.

Lise Favre, Switzerland's ambassador to the Philippines, said recently that there were no more secret accounts owned by Marcos or his family in Swiss banks.

She said the only remaining issue was the $10 million in frozen accounts under the names of Marcos cronies Herminio and Paciencia Disini, and Ignacio and Fe Roa Gimenez.

The PCGG is still waiting for a Philippine court ruling that would forfeit the $10 million in favor of the government.

Switzerland on Aug. 5 allowed the transfer to the Philippine government of $683 million in Marcos Swiss accounts being held in escrow at the Philippine National Bank after the Supreme Court ruled that the assets were ill-gotten and belonged to the government.

The Office of the Solicitor General (OSG) meanwhile disputed the claim of Swiss lawyer Patrick Foetish that the Marcos family did not own the foundations set up to hide the $683 million in Swiss accounts.

In a statement, the OSG said Foetish had represented the Vibur, Avertina, Aguamia, Maler and Palmy foundations on Feb. 10, 1999 in a settlement agreement between the Marcos heirs and the 10,000 rights abuse victims who won a class action suit against them in a United States court.

"As attorney-in-fact of the five foundations, Foetish agreed to release, assign and/or waive all their rights and interests over $150 million of the Swiss escrow deposit to the human rights victims, who sued the Marcoses in Hawaii for human rights violations," said the OSG statement.

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BSP execs' suspension a 'dangerous precedent'

By Philip C. Tubeza

TOP officials of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas yesterday warned that the Court of Appeals (CA) decision suspending them for the closure of Urban Bank in April 2000 has set a "dangerous" legal precedent.

In a 12-page motion for reconsideration, BSP Deputy Gov. Alberto V. Reyes and retired director Tomas S. Aure yesterday asked the CA's Fifth Division to set aside its controversial decision.

"The honorable court based its decision on a wrong premise and inapplicable jurisprudence resulting as it did in a glaringly erroneous conclusion and dangerous precedent if not reconsidered," the BSP officials said.

They said they found it "disturbing" that the CA said that the justices are now "tasked... to determine whether or not the public officials behind the bank's closure acted in the manner asked of them under the law."

"This assertion entails serious repercussions as it may be interpreted to mean that the Honorable Court arrogated unto itself the task of scrutinizing how BSP officials should discharge and exercise their mandate as an independent monetary authority," the officials said.

They also warned that the CA decision may even scare BSP officials from discharging their functions due to threats of lawsuits from owners of closed banks who can always wangle favorable court decisions.

In their motion, the BSP officials also chided the CA for intruding into a highly technical domain where it lacks expertise, and for insisting its own judgement rather than the findings of BSP officials who are knowledgeable and specifically trained for the positions they hold.

The CA suspended BSP Gov. Rafael Buenaventura and four of his deputies last Aug. 13 for "gross neglect of duty" for ordering the closure of Urban Bank Inc. and its subsidiaries Urbancorp Development Bank and the Urbancorp Investments Inc.

Also suspended were Reyes, Aure, Ma. Dolores V. Yuvienco and Candon B. Guerrero.

In their motion, Reyes and Aure defended the bank's closure.

GMA approves immediate sale of Napocor assets

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has approved the immediate sale of the generating assets of National Power Corp. (Napocor) to cut the government's budget deficit and avert looming electricity shortages, an official said yesterday.

Ms Macapagal also ordered officials working to privatize the assets of state-run and cash-strapped Napocor to resolve—by this week—whether to negotiate a contract or hold another bidding round to lease its transmission assets after a second attempt failed.

The first round in July saw Singapore Power Corp. as the lone company to show an interest in the transmission facilities. At least two parties must be willing to bid for a round to proceed.

The government is expected to raise at least P50 billion pesos ($902 million) from the privatization of power plants and transmission facilities—if it can find the buyers.

"This morning, the President endorsed and approved the sale of the gencos (generating companies) and that they will start advertising them tomorrow," Allan Ortiz, president of National Transmission Corp., said in a speech.

The government originally planned to privatize the transmission assets of Napocor before it sold the power plants.

Foreign investors have shown little appetite for Philippine power assets, scared off by the uncertain regulatory environment and delays in passing a law granting a franchise to the firm that leases the transmission assets. *Reuters*

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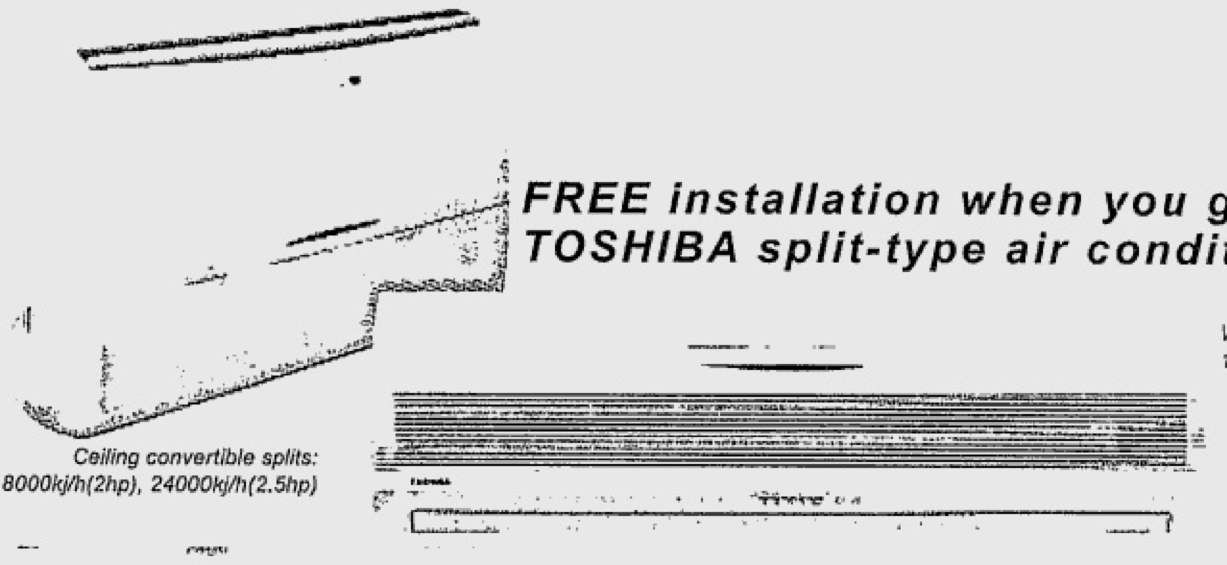

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ISSN 0116-2642
INQUIRER
Vol. 18 No. 260
Email: feedback@inquirer.com.ph website: http://www.inq7.net

OPINION

THE PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER, INC. has its business and editorial offices at
•Chino Roces Ave corner Yague and Mascardo Sts., Makati City
•P.O. Box 2353 Makati Central Post Office 1263 Makati City
•Our telephone numbers are 897-8808 connecting all departments
•Editorial Fax 897-4793 / 897-4794 •Advertising 897-4807
•Circulation 527-3342 / 527-3348 / 528-0183 /
528-0186 and 528-0213 / Fax: 528-02-34.

Publisher **ISAGANI YAMBOT**
Editor in Chief **LETTY JIMENEZ-MAGSANOC**
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Fear of shadows

EDITORIAL

SEN. Gregorio Honasan continues to profess his innocence but keeps acting like he were guilty of masterminding the failed coup mounted by young military officers last July 27. One month after the short-lived uprising, Honasan remains in hiding, living life on the run like a fugitive from justice. But at least for now, it looks like he is afraid of his own shadow. The authorities are not hunting him down; in fact, no warrant for his arrest has even been issued.

Almost from the onset of the coup, police officials tagged Honasan as its principal instigator. They said he was a key participant in several meetings where the plot to overthrow the government of President Macapagal-Arroyo was hatched, including a June 12 meeting where a blood compact was allegedly staged. Charges of coup d'etat have been filed against him before the Department of Justice.

Honasan, who led several coup attempts against the government of then President Corazon Aquino, has consistently denied involvement in the latest military attempt to grab power. "I categorically say that my life, if I can help it, as a renegade, as a coup plotter, as a rebel is over," he told reporters in a clandestine press conference over the weekend. "I am, in a way, a victim of my past."

Honasan, who had earlier declared his intention to run for president in next year's elections, said the charges being leveled against him were "purely political." He added that he had his lawyers' assurance that the evidence against him could not stand in court.

Honasan deludes himself if he thinks he stands a good chance of winning the presidency in 2004. Only 2 percent of the respondents said they would vote for him, according to the latest survey done by Pulse Asia. So why would the administration go out of its way to shoot down his candidacy when there are far stronger candidates from the opposition?

For an innocent man, Honasan has been exhibiting a strange behavior. Only twice after the coup was launched did he show himself in public: first to meet with the rebels at Oakwood and then to deliver a privilege speech in the Senate, defending himself and justifying the actions of the rebel officers. In both instances, he first secured a guarantee from government officials that he would not be arrested on sight. After that he made himself "inaccessible"—to the authorities, to his colleagues and to his constituents.

At first he said he would only come out if the President lifted her proclamation of a state of rebellion lest he be arrested without warrant. She has since done that, but Honasan has remained in hiding. He then said he would only surface after the charges against him are clarified and made bailable. For him being convicted by a kangaroo court, imprisonment and being "erased" from society are the "worst-case scenario," he said, and his confidence in government was "low."

If this is how the senator regards our courts of law and the various agencies of government, he really ought to consider giving up his Senate seat. If one so highly placed in government cannot trust the courts to give impartial justice, how can ordinary citizens expect to get a fair deal from our justice system? If he wants the government to change to his satisfaction, he should just prepare to spend the rest of his life on the run.

Honasan tells anyone who cares to listen that he is innocent. If he is, then that should give him the confidence to face his accusers in a court of law, no matter how imperfect it might be. Honasan only convicts himself by hiding even when nobody is looking for him.

Election circus

FOREIGN COMMENT

IT may well be that actor Arnold Schwarzenegger, if elected, will be a far better governor than the present and apparently impossible Democrat Gray Davis.

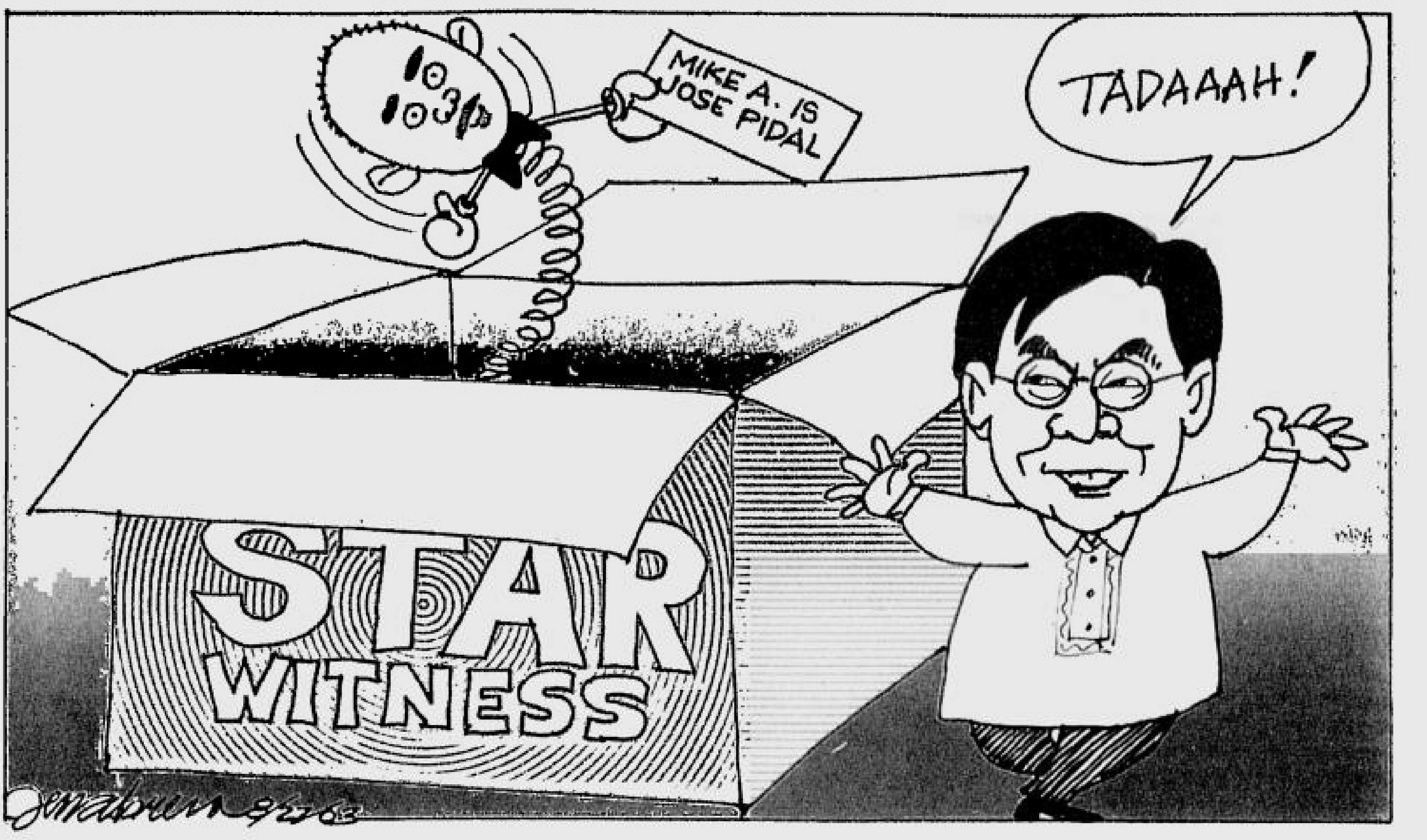
But even if the Terminator should turn out to be a savior in Californian politics, it doesn't change the fact that the present political circus out west is an embarrassment to the state.

There are many reasons why things have gone so wrong in California. One of them, undoubtedly, is the strengthened access and use of elections which exists there. It's the Californian preference for direct democracy that now puts Gray Davis in danger of losing power after less than a year as governor.

Direct democracy with many elections may appear attractive, but in reality, it removes from the elected politicians the responsibility of society's welfare.

The result can be seen in California where the present politicians have been incapable of taking the needed decisions to save the state's ruined economy. Instead, we now get an election circus where millions of dollars are burned in a recall campaign that makes most of the United States shake its head in disbelief.

There will be, no doubt, something to clean up for the Terminator, if he gets elected. *Berlingske Tidende (Copenhagen, Denmark)*



It's wrong for Big Mike to be a TNT

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

WE have a new prominent TNT (*tago ng tago*): First Gentleman Mike Arroyo. He is hiding not from US authorities but from the media. Whereas before, he loved the limelight, he now shuns it. He makes his pretty spokesperson, Patricia Bunye, very busy running from forum to forum answering questions about Mr. Arroyo, Jose Pidal and their bank accounts. And yet Bunye and another spokesperson, lawyer Tenefrancia, told the Kapihan sa Manila last Monday that they were not employees of Mr. Arroyo nor of Malacañang.

Asked who was paying them, they replied that they are not getting any pay. What they're doing is *gratis*, for the love of Mike! What loyalty.

Anyway, Mr. Arroyo's present TNT tactics is not doing him any good. If he thinks that by making himself scarce and refusing to grant any interviews the hubbub about him will die down, he is wrong. The camp of Sen. Panfilo Lacson will not let that happen. That is why he is coming out with his exposé in installments, to stretch out this scrap opera as long as possible. After which there will be the Senate hearings and the court trials.

The pro-Arroyo camp has fielded an army of public relations practitioners to work on the media but the Lacson camp has beaten them by a mile. Not because the latter's operatives are more brilliant but because of the public's natural curiosity, what may be called the "Peeping Tom mentality." The more a celebrity hides from the limelight, the more curious about him the people become. Media compete with one another to scoop their rivals with interviews and other stories.

The antidote to that is to overexpose him to the public, so that after a while the media and the public get too much of him and turn to other curiosities. What I'm saying is that Mr. Arroyo's TNT strategy is wrong. He should make himself available so that the public will eventually get so tired of looking at his mug that they would turn off the TV set or read other stories in the newspapers instead.

After all, an innocent person falsely accused would ordinarily be all over town airing his side. People think that a person who hides is guilty. "What is he afraid of? He must be guilty." For it is against human nature for an innocent person to hide from the public.

And the Lacson camp is milking this natural public curiosity to the maximum. The PR campaign has been scripted like a telenovela. There is suspense, heroes and villains, a supporting cast, mystery and intrigue, even hints of a love triangle. There are parts 1, 2, 3 and 4 of the exposé so that people will eagerly await the next chapter. Lacson has wisely not used up all his ammunition in one salvo. He doesn't present all his witnesses at once. The first is Mike's messenger and godson who testified that he witnessed Mr. Arroyo sign Jose Pidal on checks that he was ordered to cash at the bank branches below. That was how Clarissa Ocampo pinned down President Estrada for confidently signing "Jose Velarde" in front of her.

Lacson claims he has another witness who was "an inch away" from Mr. Arroyo when he signed "Jose Pidal" on bank documents, but he is not saying who it is. That will be in the next installment. *Abangan ang susunod na kabanata.* Suspense.

Lacson has a list of 11 other witnesses against Mr. Arroyo but did not give their addresses to the blue ribbon committee chair Sen. Joker Arroyo—a smart move. If their addresses were known, agents can go to their homes and subject them to pressure. Enterprising journalists can visit them too and get their stories before they are presented as witnesses. That will take away the suspense and curiosity.

Lacson also waits for the Arroyo camp to make mistakes in answering his revelations so far. He waits until he sees the whites of Mr. Arroyo's eyes before shooting—to save ammunition. Like the denial that Mr. Arroyo "does not know" Vicky Toh. So Lacson shows the photograph of Mr. Arroyo and Toh together. Ms Bunye tried to save Mr. Arroyo by telling the Kapihan crowd that "it was her fault," that she didn't know the two were close friends when she made the statement to the press.

The Lacson camp is waiting for more gaffes like that. And that is why the Arroyo camp is challenging Lacson to file the case in court and present all his evidence. Then they can prepare their counter-affidavits to answer the charges, without fear that Lacson would come back with a new surprise.

But the Lacson strategy is clear: stretch this scandal as long as possible for maximum publicity. It will certainly be used in the 2004 presidential campaign against President Macapagal-Arroyo—if she decides to run.

Question: Won't the attacks on the First Family stop when she declares categorically that she would stick to her promise not to run again in 2004? After all, the family is being attacked to whittle down her chances at the polls.

Question: When Lacson was accused of having a secret bank account abroad, he offered; "If you can find any, it's yours." Why can't Mr. Arroyo offer the same thing if he is not Jose Pidal? "If you can find a Jose Pidal bank account, it's yours."

* * *

TODAY'S JOKE: Close presidential friend and confidante Vicky Garchitorena is in the doghouse in Malacañang. Here is how it happened.

Garchitorena called the First Family's private line in Malacañang. The President answered it, "Who's this?"

Garchitorena: "*Si Vicky 'to.*"

Expletives at the other end and the phone went dead.

Reality check

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

"IT'S the economy, stupid" was the line Bill Clinton used against George Bush Sr. in the 1992 elections. It was actually coined by political strategist James Carville who hung it as a sign on Clinton's headquarters to remind everyone where the bottom line lay. Bush then was aglow in the aftermath of the Gulf War, the majority of Americans saying they would vote for him if elections were held then.

Unfortunately for him, the elections came a couple of years late. By then, most Americans had forgotten the rumbling of the tanks and remembered only the rumbling of their stomachs. Clinton used the line "It's the economy, stupid" to lethal effect, Bush's attempts to rekindle patriotic fervor falling on deaf ears.

Déjà vu.

To go by Newsweek's recent survey, only 44 percent of American voters will vote for Bush Jr. if elections were held today against 49 percent who won't. That is a far cry from the overwhelming majority of the Americans, most of them voters, who expressed approval of Bush, in the immediate aftermath of the Iraq war that ended swiftly with few Allied casualties. Today as well, according to Newsweek, only 23 percent of the Americans say terrorism and homeland security would be their issues in the November elections next year. Some 48 percent say theirs would be jobs and the economy.

Many economists had already been warning so after the Iraq war. In April, with Bush still flush with victory in Iraq, the United States lost 48,000 jobs. The Economist reported: "500,000 jobs have disappeared in the past three months pushing the total lost under Bush Junior to over two million. Long term unemployment, at 1.9 million, is the highest in 10 years, and those numbers do not include the large numbers of discouraged workers (people who want work but have given up looking) and the larger number of underemployed (those who are working, but not as much as they would like to)."

Bush's tax cuts moreover have only increased inequality by favoring the rich. As tax cuts go, it has surprisingly managed to be unpopular. It allows ordinary families to save $217 per year and families earning over a million dollars $93,500. The only American winners in the Iraq war in fact have been the defense contractors, headed by the same people who prosecuted the war, who have been making a killing, pun very much intended. The CEO pay in companies like Bechtel and Halliburton (where Dick Cheney was once CEO) rose by 79 percent compared to 6 percent for the rest of America.

Meanwhile, the cost of "rebuilding Iraq" is estimated to run to $100 billion for the first year alone. Ironically, as Don Hazen points out, "$100 billion is essentially the amount required to bail out the states this year from their enormous financial crisis, to cover their combined revenue shortfall." The sum would further "provide health care for all the uninsured children in the United States for at least five years."

It's only been a few months since the Iraq war. With Bush's fortunes going the way they are, it's not unlikely he'll be worse off next year than today, when the real costs of the war, including the political, kick in. Whoever runs against Bush can always resurrect the line, "It's the economy, stupid," the last word said with greater conviction. And produce the same results as Clinton.

I've always thought every burst of McCarthyism produced its backlash. McCarthy simply lasted longer—five years, from February 1950 to December 1954. And I've always said I believed in the American people's capacity to come to their senses after sudden jingoistic outbursts. They did so after the Vietnam War, they'll do so today. Notwithstanding that their way to rediscovering their appetite for their democratic inheritance often begins with physical hunger.

It's a good perspective from which to view the visit of George Bush to this country in October. GMA will doubtless pull out all stops to greet the American president with fanfare and remind Filipinos he wants her to remain President of this country, possibly for life. But even if that is what Bush wants—and it remains arguable that he does, American presidents have not been known to express a preference for individual candidates, only for people generally who would defend American interests—it must be asked why we must try to please a US president who is not likely to be around after next year.

But more than a meeting of two losers, it will be a meeting of two leaders who brought their respective countries to the brink of ruin. The Pew survey of world attitudes in December last year already showed the steep plunge of the American image around the world, notably in the Arab countries, and the Iraq war hadn't taken place yet then. We do not need an equally epic survey to know the attitudes of other Asian countries to us. The meeting of non-aligned countries early this year, which compelled GMA to tone down her pro-Bush rhetoric already showed so.

Bush has impoverished his countrymen and robbed them of their freedom in the name of bringing it to the world, GMA has done the same thing to her country in the name of helping him do it. She has devastated the economy—the difference between the Southeast Asian economies and that of the Philippines', a text joke says, is that the first is *de-motor*, the second *de-Pidal*—and brought back a season of coups by putting the generals on top of the world once more. Happily, she hasn't just brought back a season of coups, she has, like Bush, brought back a season of change. Those things do have a backlash.

Five years after McCarthy made a mess of America, the Senate voted overwhelmingly to condemn his conduct. Short of those things happening in the United States and this country, there are always the elections to set things right.

* * *

Comments to dequiros@info.com.ph

GMA's political gains from Oakwood

ANALYSIS

Amando Doronila

PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo has emerged with enhanced approval and trust ratings from the worst crisis of her 31-month presidency—the July 27 military coup. A survey taken by Pulse Asia on April and August shows an overall approval rating of 51 percent for her performance—a gain of 6 percentage points from 45 percent in April.

Taking a parallel track, her public trust rating rose to 44 percent, up by 6 percentage points from 38 percent in April. Approval and trust ratings are two different things—the first is an evaluation of performance; the second being an intrinsic judgment of an individual. For example, former President Aquino's trust ratings ran ahead of her approval ratings.

Pulse Asia attributes the improvement of the President's approval rating to the "swift and peaceful" resolution of the Oakwood hotel siege.

What should be heartening to the President is that Class E, the poorest or the lowest income group, the main component of the urban poor, the constituency of deposed President Joseph Estrada, gave her the highest approval rating—56 percent, a jump from 41 percent in April. It is important to note that the efforts of the renegade officers, as evidenced by documents on the coup conspiracy, to recruit the rabble to support the coup with street demonstrations failed.

The improvement in the approval rating was lowest among the middle class and upper class (class ABC)—only 48 percent, a very slight increase from the 46 percent in April. Support for the government from the business class was tepid. The businessmen hedged their bets and quibbled over the tough emergency measures taken by the government to quash the uprising.

The survey findings indicate overall, across the regions and classes, that people approve strong measures taken by the government, regardless of the legal nitpicking, among lawyers and in the Senate, over their labels. Next time, another coup is mounted, the findings should assure the President of public support for a tough anti-coup response and she should not hesitate to deploy emergency powers to save the state from armed attack.

The President's relatively high approval rating in the April 2002 survey may be explained in part by her management performance in handling the SARS epidemic crisis, during which she held a high public profile. Filipinos like their leaders to be visible and to man the frontline during crises. But I must say, despite the swift and peaceful resolution of the Oakwood siege, the government faltered in the early hours of the crisis during which the coup plotters seized the media initiative while it took time for the President to show her presence on TV. Her momentary invisibility was demoralizing and left the impression that she was paralyzed by the shock of the seizure of Oakwood. This lapse should never happen again and if it does, the consequences for her government would be fatal and disastrous. The survey shows that the policy of toughness against coups works and translates to public opinion support. No citizen, rich or poor, can rely and respect a government that cannot defend itself from rebellions.

The survey findings should not lull the President into complacency. She should not interpret them as an endorsement of the moves—fueled by some of her political allies—to have her go back on her Dec. 30 promise not to stand for election in May 2004. The warning should be heeded that the findings do not translate to electoral support.

The other part of the survey shows that the President has improved her ranking in the public's presidential preferences. She now ranks second, with 21 percent, moving up from fifth place in April. She follows Sen. Noli de Castro, with 26 percent. The President has moved past former Education Secretary Raul Roco, who polled 16 percent, and Sen. Panfilo Lacson, her tormentor, with 11 percent. In the April survey, De Castro polled 20 percent, Roco 18 percent and Lacson 12 percent, while the President trailed at 9 percent. De Castro, Roco and Lacson lost ground in the August survey.

Presidential flatterers and allies who are urging her to discard her promise will find cold comfort in the findings that 51 percent of Filipinos say that she should keep her pledge, but 48 percent agree that her decision not to run is right.

As more polls are taken, the findings show a winnowing process is taking place and taking their toll. The coup, it would seem from the surveys, has acted as a defining event in the process of elimination. In the August survey, Fernando Poe Jr.—whoever planted the idea he can be at least a functional president, or can win—lost ground. He polled 9 percent, from 12 percent in April. As for Sen. Gringo Honasan, the survey shows his presidential pretensions have not been helped by the coup. During the attack on Oakwood, Honasan, who has been accused by the government of being the mastermind of the coup conspiracy, grabbed the crisis to project his aspirations for the presidency. He polled a mere 2 percent. In future polls, we should expect the list to be shorter, with more falling by the wayside.

Another significant finding is that fewer people (24 percent) cited graft and corruption as a matter of concern, while more (31 percent) considered economic recovery as the primary concern, followed by 28 percent who cited law and order.

How the raking attack mounted by Lacson in the Senate against the President's husband (for alleged illegal diversion of Ms Macapagal's 1998 campaign contributions) damaged the President's approval and trust ratings, this we will know in the next survey.

Never-ending service

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

ON THE WAY back to Villa San Miguel after a full day of appointments, Jaime Cardinal Sin turned to his official and personal photographer, Noli Yamsuan, and, sighing, said: "Noli, it will never end."

The Cardinal was referring, of course, to the seemingly endless demands for his presence and time—in the blessing of new churches and parishes, in the observance of important religious events, in visits to communities of the faithful, in dealing with his auxiliary bishops and priests, in consulting with politicians and community leaders, and of course, in lending his voice and his views to bear on issues of public concern.

Because he is turning 75 at the end of the month, an age that is by tradition the retirement age for clerics, there's a whirlwind of speculation swirling around Cardinal Sin, specifically on who his successor will be. Tasteless as such speculations may be, one thing remains clear, whoever succeeds the Cardinal will have enormous shoes to fill.

For the moment, though, it still isn't clear if or when Cardinal Sin will step down as Archbishop of Manila. The Vatican could very well decide to continue his term as head of the country's premiere archdiocese and, therefore, as titular head of the local church. Despite his frail health, the Cardinal will have no choice but to soldier on, and yes, "it will never end" indeed.

Still, when he leaves the archbishopric, be it this year or a decade hence or beyond that, there is little doubt that Jaime Cardinal Sin has already made his impact on history. By his words, in speeches, homilies, exhortations and even the jokes with which he used to pepper his public statements, the Cardinal doubtless influenced public opinion and the outcome of national events. For good or ill, depending on how one stands on the issue of Church involvement in politics and policy.

* * *

IT was for his words—often coming at crucial junctures in the nation's history—that the Catholic Author awardees honored Cardinal Sin last Sunday with the "Lumen Christi" award, a "one-time-only" honor for "embodying for Filipinos, in the last 30-plus years, the sign of hope that is the Christian faith for humanity."

Archbishop Angel Lagdameo of Jaro (where Cardinal Sin served before his appointment to Manila), explaining how the more than 150 Catholic Author awardees decided collectively to honor the Cardinal, said that the Cardinal in his years in service to the archdiocese had been a "word of hope for the Filipino people," an "Easter person" who by word and deed had been a source of hope and faith for the nation.

However moving these words, an even better testament to the Cardinal's decades of service is the book "Scenes of Sin," an updated collection of photographs, many of them intimate and unguarded shots of the prelate, taken by Yamsuan in the decades that he served as a "close-in" photographer to the Cardinal. Many of the photos tug at the heart. Not just because they show how the Cardinal brought his marvelous humanity to bear on a Church at the crossroads, but also because they recall a much younger Cardinal, full of vigor and good humor. We remember the Cardinal of old, but are ever thankful for his continued presence and involvement in our lives.

* * *

SUNDAY afternoon was truly an occasion for breaking out of the usual. There was only one Catholic Author awardee this year, and that was no other than former President Cory Aquino. She was cited for "(raising) up the highest ideals of human and Christian living" in her writings and speeches, with the previous awardees expressing the hope that "now she will not only complete her autobiography, but publish most of her writings."

In response, President Aquino said she feels she's "not really qualified for the award" though the honor would, she noted, push her to work even harder and to finish her book. "The year has been very good for me," she confided as she shared her thoughts on how she decided on this year of Ninoy's 20th death anniversary, to "focus on the good that Filipinos do."

* * *

"ART with a Mission," an exhibit and sale of art works by noted Filipino painters, opens on Sept. 4 and runs until Sept. 14 at the SVD Mission Office Exhibit Hall, Christ the King Seminary, E. Rodriguez Blvd., Quezon City.

The exhibit features paintings by artists Tam Austria, Angelito Antonio, Norma Belleza, Loreto Racuya, Pat Reyes, Jaime Kwong, Fatima, and Raul Patindol.

Organized by the spouses of former SVD (Society of the Divine Word) seminarians, who call themselves "XVDs," led by chairperson Abra Mayor Ma. Zita Claustro-Valera and vice chairpersons Dr. Alma Maria Figueras and Edna Sarmiento, the exhibit is aimed at raising funds for Filipino SVD missionaries working in mission territories in the country and abroad.

Part of the proceeds will also go to the Villa Cristo Rey, a nursing and retirement home that aims to give retired and ailing SVD bishops, priests and brothers, proper medical care in an atmosphere of quiet dignity and prayer.

While Villa Cristo Rey tries its best to respond to the needs of its residents, its operations are hampered by a constant budget deficit and limited facilities. Administrators Fr. Alfredo Reyes, SVD, and Fr. Michael Padua, SVD, say that aside from medicines and supplies, it needs equipment for physical and occupational therapy, and a properly equipped infirmary and isolation room.

Fr. Jerry Orbos, SVD, mission director, and Josephus Asis, president of the XVD Association Inc., invite everyone to "invest for eternity" not just by purchasing outstanding works of art, but by supporting a good cause. For inquiries, call Dr. Emma Torio at Tel. No. 741-6429 or 0918-9201968.

Reminiscences

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

SOME people find it odd that I find Internet auctions more engaging than porn sites. Maybe it's age or the way I was trained in childhood. But the wide range of Filipiniana on sale each day gets me excited. Of course, a lot of it is kitsch—coins, stamps, postcards, Barbie dolls, even those famous Baguio curios—the "man-in-the-barrel" and the Igorot maiden whose wooden legs are used as a nut cracker (pun unintended here). I have even seen "the shy plant" a.k.a. *makahiya* described like an exotic orchid. *Makahiya* was part of my childhood and I recall kicking whole patches of these and watched them close. Those clumps of *makahiya* are worth dollars.

Finding the needle in the proverbial haystack is the reward for hours of scanning the auctions. At one instance, the shorts Muhammad Ali used during the "Thrilla in Manila" were put on the block as well as the posters to the Beatles concert in Manila. Thrice I have seen books autographed by Ferdinand Marcos. I wouldn't buy "Todays Revolution: Democracy" for the text, but for Marcos' autograph on the flyleaf. The copies on sale were inscribed to obscure people, which explains why the starting bids were so low. These books, once prized possessions, are now literally in the dustbin of history.

As one person's *basura* is another one's treasure and vice-versa, the secret is getting these people to meet and Internet auctions facilitate this. As a historian, however, I'm more interested in the diaries, correspondence or reminiscences of the people who visited Marcos and received these autographed books. What did they talk about? What were their impressions of Marcos? Heads of state receive many callers daily yet little documentation is left for the historian.

On Oct. 31, 1898 a British army officer, G. J. Younghusband, traveled to Malolos and waited in the receiving room for close to five hours just to meet Aguinaldo. His meeting is one of the highlights of the book, "The Philippines and Round About" (1899). He described Aguinaldo's office, sleeping bodyguard and other callers. In time, he was:

"Conducted into Aguinaldo's private study, where we found him seated at a large desk covered with papers and books. The great man rose and advanced a few steps to meet us, and in a quiet and dignified manner said he was glad to make the acquaintance of an English officer. Aguinaldo is a young man of only twenty-nine years of age, stands about five feet, four inches in height, is slightly built, and was dressed in a coat and trousers of drab tussore silk. He is a pure Philippine native, though showing a slight trace of Chinese origin, of dark complexion and much pockmarked. His face is square and determined, the lower lip protruding markedly.

"On the whole a man of pleasant demeanour, even-tempered and with strong characteristics. Slow of speech, and perhaps also of thought, his past career has hall-marked him as a man of prompt decision and prompter action. Many people, and amongst others Admiral Dewey, were much puzzled to find so quiet and apparently unintelligent and listless a young man the acknowledged and undisputed head of so great a movement. Many thought that he was a mere puppet in the hands of stronger men, others that he was a safe weak man bolstered up by strong conflicting powers on all sides, much in the way that Switzerland as a nation is bolstered up in Europe by strong powers on all sides. But a remarkably prompt action served to show that Aguinaldo was no puppet, but sailed decisively on his own bottom. A short time ago it appears that another of the insurgent leaders began to secure a following which bade fair to shake the supremacy of Aguinaldo. The President stayed to take no half measures, attempted no parleying; he grasped the nettle firmly, and ordering his reputed rival out into the courtyard, had him shot on the spot." [Is this a reference to Bonifacio or Luna or someone else?]

"In the course of conversation the subject of an American Protectorate came up. Now up to this date both Aguinaldo and the men of influence around him had openly declared that it was their wish to start their new life under the protection of a recognized power, and preferably under that of the American nation. But on this day, Aguinaldo most emphatically declared that he and his followers had fought for complete independence, and that they would shed the last drop of their blood in securing it. These were practically his very words, and forsaking his quiet demeanour, he went so far as to thump the desk with his fist for emphasis. This was a most weighty utterance, and if seriously meant was tantamount to a declaration of war against America should the result of the Peace Conference include a provision that the Philippine Islands were to be handed over to that Power." [We were handed over to the US, thus leading to the outbreak of the Filipino-American War in 1898.]

As Aguinaldo showed him a captured Spanish battle standard as well as the flag of the first republic, Younghusband noted Aguinaldo's son wearing a military uniform playing about in the office. He also remarked that members of the cabinet were very young, in his estimate not more than 25 years old. The last detail is most amusing, Aguinaldo's high collar was not buttoned securely on his coat and thus kept going up and down. On this note the interview ends.

* * *

Comments are welcome at aocampo@ateneo.edu

Life in God's hands

HIGH BLOOD

Rev. Salvador D. Eduarte Sr.

EFFECTIVE this year, I shall have served in various capacities in our Church as parish pastor, educator, program director and chaplain for an incredibly 30 happy years or for more than a quarter of a century.

Members of the clergy in our denomination are effectively retired upon reaching the age of 65 after serving no less than 20 years—during the most productive years of our earthly existence. Because work in the church partakes of the nature of an employer-employee relationship, almost all of us are members of the Social Security System and enjoy other benefits like free hospitalization, insurance and some subsidy for the education of our children.

I don't want to convey to our readers the impression that pastoral service is all a bed of roses. The ministry is unlike most earthly professions. It is more of a calling, a vocation. It entails sacrifices; it calls for death to self so that one lives in the service to others. Like medical doctors, pastors are on call 24 hours a day. We encounter the faces of death and sickness every day. We respond to calls for help even after having gone to bed. We maintain a rigid self-discipline of meditation, prayer, study and holy introspection. As God's representatives to all kinds of people, we maintain a certain deportment in the face of opposition, persecution, insults and hostility to the God we claim to represent.

WE'D also like to know the concerns of the sixtysomething and above, what makes their blood pressure rise or makes them sit back, content that all's well with their world and with themselves. —Ed.

How does one get to be a minister of the Gospel in the first place?

One must be *called* to the ministry. This cannot be overemphasized. The candidate must be willing to go anywhere, serve the Lord in His Church with or without salary. One must have a certain amount of education to be an effective servant of the Gospel: normally four years of college and four years of seminary. In my case, because I later went into seminary teaching, I had to undergo four more years after my master's degree; a total of 14 years after high school. But when one chooses ministry in the parish, eight years of study after high school is the minimum requirement. At least, the United Church of Christ in the Philippines, because of its mainly Presbyterian tradition, calls for an educated clergy, and many of the founders of the famous American centers of higher learning like Harvard, Yale, Princeton and Dartmouth were ministers of the Gospel.

Because pastors in the UCCP do not take the vow of celibacy, all of us are married men with families. From my first marriage, (I am a widower and have remarried), I have three children: one has a degree in economics and heads an NGO; the second has a degree in philosophy and theology and teaches philosophy at a Christian university in Manila; and the third is now a senior in a seminary, following the footsteps of his father. With such blessings from the Lord, what more could a man wish for?

This made me self-reflective and in many ways thankful to God as I looked back to my poverty-stricken childhood. To get a college education, I washed dishes, swept floors, worked as a laborer in a construction firm and did other menial tasks. I was the only one in our family with a college degree. Nobody in our barrio believed that someday I would break out of the chain of poverty that was the lot of our family. I have proven that being poor is not a reason to resign ourselves to hopelessness and despair.

I am now a grandfather of three—I feel too young to write my memoirs but too old to apply for another job. I try, however, to keep myself busy because I remember my father saying that an idle mind is a workshop of the devil. Meantime, by God's grace and guidance, I pray for world peace, for those who are oppressed, for the innocent children who are victims of war. I am writing a book at present on prayer and the devotional life, spending not less than four hours reading the Holy Scripture, in addition to raising chickens and hogs and helping my in-laws in our small fishfarm.

Life is what we make it. For having lived more than half a century in this earthly pilgrimage, for having served the Lord during the best years of my life and for having a vision of a glorious future in an age of cynicism, unbelief—despite war clouds hovering over the Middle East and North Korea—I can sleep soundly, because I trust in God and in His holy purposes for humankind. I agree with Shakespeare that an honest life is the best pillow to sleep on.

So, may we live for the glory of God in our humble, little way, each day a challenge to do our best; and each night a repose from our labors—living each moment as though there were no tomorrows—doing the will of God until He calls us Home.

Rev. Salvador D. Eduarte Sr. is a retired minister of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines and university professor. He is now in the business of writing sermons and sermon illustrations for pastors and others engaged in public speaking.

THEY SAID

A life of sacrifice

"Let us have an ethic of simple living in government. If one's family can't stand a life of relative sacrifice and frugality, he or she must leave the service."
—President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo

The power of love

"It feels good to be loved even though you feel that you don't deserve that love."
—Bishop Teodoro Bacani

Thanks, but never mind

"We may be the most well-known victim but we are not the worst off."
—Benigno Aquino III on his family's refusal to partake of the billions to be awarded to martial law victims

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Deafening silence

WHEN reports of Joseph Estrada amassing millions in bank deposits became daily fare, the so-called civil society groups, rich businessmen's club and other self-proclaimed moralists, lost no time conspiring to plot his downfall.

The battle cry: to bring back morality in government.

This led to the massing of people at the Edsa Shrine, demanding Estrada's resignation.

Now, the situation is reversed.

The people Edsa Dos put in power are now themselves accused of amassing wealth in much the same way Estrada did. This time, Jose Pidal shares the same address as the First Gentleman's.

While the air is now politically charged owing to the proximity of the next elections, those who earlier took upon themselves to exemplify morality should now take the lead in piecing together the puzzle of this recent anomaly.

Their inaction on the matter shows mental dishonesty or their double standard of justice.

Their silence is so deafening.

—BENJIE GUERRERO,
Business Center, The Sulo Hotel,
Matalino Road, Diliman,
Quezon City

'Nakakahiya kay Ninoy'

ALTHOUGH the Oakwood mutineers now find themselves pressed on the legality of their method to instigate change, their charges against the hierarchies of the defense department, Armed Forces of the Philippines and the government are serious. Those who relentlessly persecute and criticize them as rogue soldiers merely bent on adventurism, only serve to promote the status quo of unfathomable corruption and economic inequality in our country.

Last Aug. 21, we celebrated Ninoy Aquino's 20th death anniversary. Save from toppling a dictator, it now seems his death has gone to waste. I thought I was at the crossroads of history when Edsa happened. I felt privileged among generations of Filipinos, expecting to witness sweeping changes that would improve the lives of the majority of our people. But where are we now? A recent study ranked us 11th among the most corrupt countries in the world.

Nakakahiya kay Ninoy.

—IKE P. SARMIENTO,
Bulacan, Bulacan

A veteran's widow cries for help

I AM the widow of World War II veteran Salomon Arroyo Elpedes who died on Dec. 27, 2000.

While I am regularly receiving the monthly old age pension effective May 2002, I have not yet received my pension-in-arrears amounting to P71,500 covering the period of December 2000 to April 2002 despite my letters to the PVAO dated March 7, 2002, July 28, 2002, Nov. 20, 2002 and April 23, 2003. The PVAO has never bothered to answer any of them.

Where do I go for help now?

I need the money so that my family can make both ends meet and settle the indebtedness incurred while my husband was on his deathbed.

—ELSA TULIAO ELPEDES
Purok 6, Magallanes Iraya,
Barangay Camambugan, 4600
Daet, Camarines Norte

'Marcial Bonifacio' was in good health

REGARDING the article of Norman Bordadora, "How Ninoy got valid passport" (PDI, 8/18/03), I was Ninoy's cardiologist when he was in the United States and took care of him during his hospitalization for triple coronary bypass at the Baylor University Medical Center in Dallas, Texas. Subsequently, I frequently accompanied him in domestic and foreign travels, including a trip to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia where I had the privilege of going with him for an audience with the late King Khalid at the Royal Palace. With us were Ernie Maceda and Kiyoji Wakamiya.

In that travel, we met several times with Congressman Rashid Lucman and Jun Abbas. We stayed at the Al Badr Jeddah Sheraton Hotel at Airport Street. Maceda and Wakamiya roomed together while I stayed with Ninoy in another room. It was that time he showed me the Philippine passport of "Marcial Bonifacio" with his photo. He explained that the name signified his incarceration at Fort Bonifacio during martial law. He did not volunteer nor did I ask information as to where he obtained the passport.

Another item in the article that needs clarification once and for all was his health prior to his return to Manila. There are innuendoes that he was mortally sick from his heart condition. These are not true. I monitored his health and particularly his heart condition very closely and I say he was in excellent physical condition prior to his untimely demise.

—ROLANDO M. SOLIS, M.D.,
6417 Lakeshore Drive,
Dallas, Texas, USA

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Action taken on complaint

THIS has reference to the news article regarding the foul odor and untolerable noise complaint lodged against Advance Transystem Corp., which is located at Sabalo Street cor. Tulingan Street, Caloocan City (PDI, 7/13/03).

Please be informed that prior to your article, this office had finished the investigation into the same complaint. The firm was found to have violated Section 4 of Presidential Decree 1586 for operating a junk shop without an "Environmental Compliance Certificate"; and Section 1, Rule XIX of RA 8749 for operating a generator set, without the required "Permit to Operate" from this office. The firm has been formally notified of both violations, but the notices, sent through priority mail, were returned with remarks "undelivered, insufficient address."

On June 24, 2003, the notice on the violation of PD 1586 was handed to a representative of the firm. The other notice for the violation of RA 8749 was personally delivered on July 16, 2003 to Rosalinda Galicia, the firm's corporate secretary. As part of due process, Advance Transystem has been given 30 days from the receipt of the notices to comply with the requirements. Our legal unit has already issued an order penalizing subject firm for violation of PD 1586.

As to the odor and noise nuisance complaint, the same has been referred to the office of the mayor of the City of Caloocan as the matter treated therein falls within the devolved functions under the Local Government Code.

—SIXTO E. TOLENTINO JR.,
regional director,
Environmental Management Bureau-NCR,
DENR, Congressional Plaza Bldg.,
51 Congressional Ave., Project 8, Quezon City

Status of Senate report on Lacson

IN THE COLUMN of Justice Isagani Cruz ("Separate Opinion") last Aug. 16 which discussed Senate Committee Report No. 237, Cruz, with due respect, was inaccurate when he said:

"Instead of calling for an immediate vote on the report by the Senate plenary, Senate President Franklin Drilon decided to suspend the proceedings to give time to the three chairmen and their respective members to consider the Lacson proposal (to refer the report back to the committee for further hearings)."

Committee Report No. 237 is the joint report of the Committees on Public Order and Illegal Drugs headed by Sen. Robert Barbers, National Defense and Security and Blue Ribbon which investigated the charges against certain high-ranking officials of the defunct PAOCTF, including Sen. Panfilo Lacson, for alleged drug-trafficking and serious crimes.

The record of the proceedings will show that Barbers said he was standing by the report and so did Sen. Joker Arroyo of the Blue Ribbon.

However, Sen. Jun Magsaysay moved that he be given time to consult the members of his committee, and there being no objection, Senate President Drilon granted the motion and held in abeyance action on the pending motions of Barbers for adoption of the report, and of Lacson for referral back to the joint committees.

Senate Journal, Aug. 4, 2003 on Page 86 thereof reads:

"Senator Magsaysay asked to be given time to consult the members of the Committee on National Defense and Security on the committee report.

"In view thereof, the Chair held in abeyance the motion to adopt the committee report and the motion to recommit it to the concerned committees until Senator Magsaysay shall have consulted the members of the Committee on National Defense and Security."

Last week, Magsaysay wrote a letter to the members of the defense committee seeking their opinion on the matter.

As of last Wednesday's session, Magsaysay has not reported back to the floor.

This clarification is being made to be fair to all parties concerned.

—OSCAR G. YABES,
Senate secretary,
GSIS Bldg., Roxas Boulevard,
Pasay City

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

World leaders condemn Bombay blasts

BOMBAY, India—As the search for the perpetrators of Bombay's twin terror blasts intensified Tuesday, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and US President George W. Bush led a chorus of international outrage over the bombings that killed 46 people and wounded more than 150.

With the United Nations still in shock after the attacks on the UN offices in Baghdad last week which killed 23, Annan called the bombings "despicable acts of terrorism" that could only be condemned.

"Acts of terror are intended to sow fear and chaos among free peoples," Bush said in a statement released in Crawford, Texas, where he is staying at his ranch. "I hope the perpetrators of these murders will be identified quickly and brought to justice."

Monday's atrocity "emphasizes yet again the importance of the international community taking firm action to deal with the poison of international terrorism," British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw said.

Britain, India's former colonial ruler, urged its citizens to be vigilant when visiting India's financial capital, but said there was no reason to believe foreigners were the target of the attack.

Within hours of the blasts, Pakistan—previously accused by India of sponsoring Islamic militants—also condemned the Bombay blasts, calling them "wanton targeting of civilians."

Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Kong Quan said Beijing was "shocked and condemns the explosions causing heavy casualties among the civilians."

Those sentiments were echoed elsewhere in Asia.

"The Government of Japan reaffirms its position that terrorism cannot be justified, whatever kind it may be, and resolutely condemns again terrorism in any form," said foreign ministry spokesperson Hatsuhisa Takashima.

In Thailand, foreign ministry spokesperson Sihasak Phuangketkeow said his country was on alert for terror threats.

"It's not just because of this recent incident in Bombay," he said. "We are tightening security and working closely with friends in terms of information exchanges."

Singapore, which has a large ethnic Indian population, said it was "shocked and saddened" by the "loss of many innocent lives" and Australia's Foreign Minister Alexander Downer condemned the bombings.

"Australians will deeply sympathize with the families of those affected given our own experience of terrorism," Downer said, referring to the 88 Australians who were among the 202 people killed in terror bombings on the Indonesian vacation island of Bali last year.

Downer said terrorism would be a central theme for talks planned for Thursday in Australia with Indian Foreign Minister Yashwant Sinha.

New Zealand's Foreign Minister Phil Goff said the bombers had wanted "maximum civilian casualties."

Neighboring Sri Lanka denounced the bombings as "a dastardly terrorist act."

"We hope this incident will not lead to more violence," said Foreign Minister Tyronne Fernando.

The US state department said it hoped the perpetrators would be brought to justice quickly. Secretary of State Colin Powell telephoned Sinha to voice his outrage and to extend condolences.

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan "utterly condemns the terrorist bomb attack," UN deputy spokesperson Hua Jiang said in New York.

"The perpetrators of these heinous acts must be brought to justice," said acting UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Bertrand Ramcharan in Geneva. "They must know that they will not be allowed to undermine international commitment to the basic tenets of human rights and the rule of law." *Reports from AP and AFP*

Probe focused on 2 shadowy groups

NEW DELHI—India turned the spotlight on two shadowy Muslim militant groups Tuesday, a day after two car bombs rocked Bombay and killed 46 people.

Visiting the bomb sites—in a busy jewelry business district, and at the Gateway of India tourist landmark—Deputy Prime Minister Lal Krishna Advani said the attacks bore the imprint of two militant Muslim groups, citing explosions blamed on them in Bombay in recent months.

"Earlier, these blasts were in buses, and in almost all cases the organization involved has been SIMI, acting along with Lashkar-e-Tayyaba," Advani said.

The federal government in Sept. 2001 banned the Students Islamic Movement of India, or SIMI.

In the days after the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States, SIMI members put up posters on buses and in public places in Muslim-majority neighborhoods in India, praising al-Qaida's Osama bin Laden.

SIMI leaders also gave fiery public speeches in Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state, calling Bin Laden "the champion and true savior of Islam."

At least 10 states had earlier demanded the ban because of the organization's alleged links to Islamic guerrillas. But the open support for Bin Laden and the apparent nudging of Muslims toward violence after the Sept. 11 attacks were the "final provocation," officials said.

India's home ministry said SIMI was supporting secessionists, advocating violence and working for an international Islamic order.

Lashkar-e-Tayyaba, the largest Pakistan-based group operating in the divided Kashmir region, has been fighting Indian security forces there since 1989. *AP*

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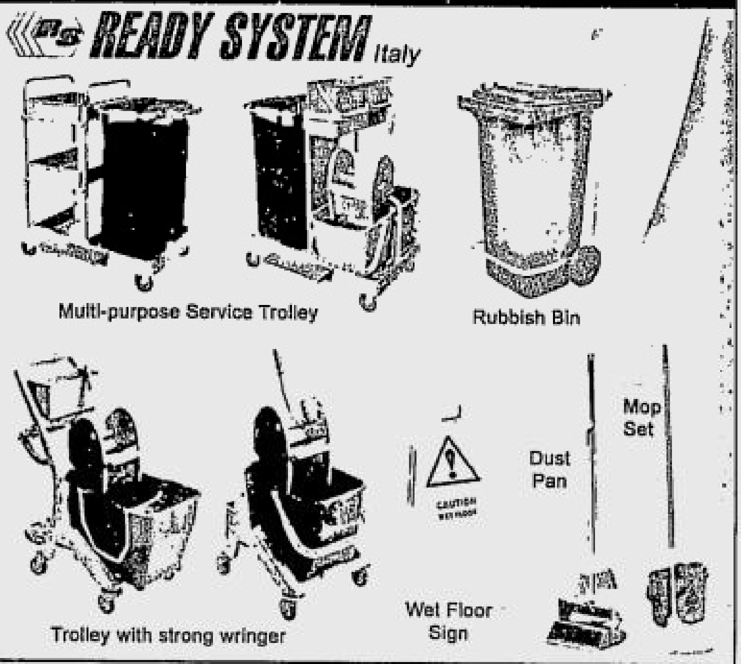

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Nasa weaknesses

WASHINGTON—The official inquiry into the Columbia space shuttle disaster is expected to make withering criticism of weaknesses at Nasa that contributed to the catastrophe. The 250-page Columbia Accident Investigation Board report into how the shuttle disintegrated as it reentered the Earth's atmosphere on Feb. 1, killing all seven astronauts, is to be released in Washington late Tuesday. The CAIB has compiled 35,000 documents and took evidence from hundreds of Nasa officials and ex-officials and experts. *AFP*

Overwhelming win

KIGALI, Rwanda—Incumbent President Paul Kagame told the world Tuesday that genocide-scarred Rwanda is "on the right path," after scoring an overwhelming election win seen as confirming support for his efforts to heal the African nation's wounds. Election officials said Kagame had 94 percent support with about half the districts reporting in Monday's presidential vote, the first since a 1994 genocide that left more than 500,000 people dead. Most victims were minority Tutsis killed by Hutu extremists. *AP*

Calm, patience urged

BEIJING—China urged Tuesday a "calm and patient attitude" in upcoming six-way talks on the North Korean nuclear crisis as Pyongyang's negotiating team arrived in Beijing and went straight into a meeting with its closest ally. "China hopes all parties will . . . show sincerity to solve the issue, adopt a calm and patient attitude, (and) respect each other," said Wang Yi, Beijing's top delegate at the talks. Wang, a vice foreign minister, also called on the six countries' delegates to "conduct consultations on an equal footing, seek common grounds and reduce disputes." *AFP*

Choppers collide

MOSCOW—Two military helicopters collided over an airfield in Russia's Far East on Tuesday, killing five people and injuring one in the second deadly helicopter crash in the area in a week, officials said. The two Mi-24 helicopters collided while attempting to land at the Chernigovka airfield in the Primorye region, about 80 km from the town of Ussurisk, the defense ministry press service said. *AP*

Newsman killed

BOGOTA—The bullet-riddled body of Journalist Andres Carmona, 29, was found in Medellin Monday, police sources said, confirming the second death of a reporter in the violence-torn country in as many days. Carmona, who disappeared Friday, had worked for RCN radio until he left to resume journalism studies. Another journalist, Juan Carlo Benavides, was killed and a colleague Jaime Conrado was wounded early Saturday by Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia rebels at a road block in southern Putumayo province. *AFP*

Frightening picture

SALEM, Massachusetts—The psychiatrist's handwritten notes are economical—and chilling. It was May 1989 and Joseph L. Druce was in jail awaiting trial for the murder of a gay man who picked him up hitchhiking. "Angry, frustrated, blaming, remorseless, intense determined man, believes in Satan, unafraid, laughing as he declares his intent to kill himself," the psychiatrist's notes say. "Expects to go to Satan and await the arrival of his enemies," the report says later, quoting Druce as saying, "I'll wait with a fork for them to come down too! ... I'll die before I serve a life sentence!" Druce, accused of strangling defrocked priest John Geoghan, was a rage-filled criminal with a history of drug abuse and mental troubles when he was sent to prison, court and criminal records show. *AP*

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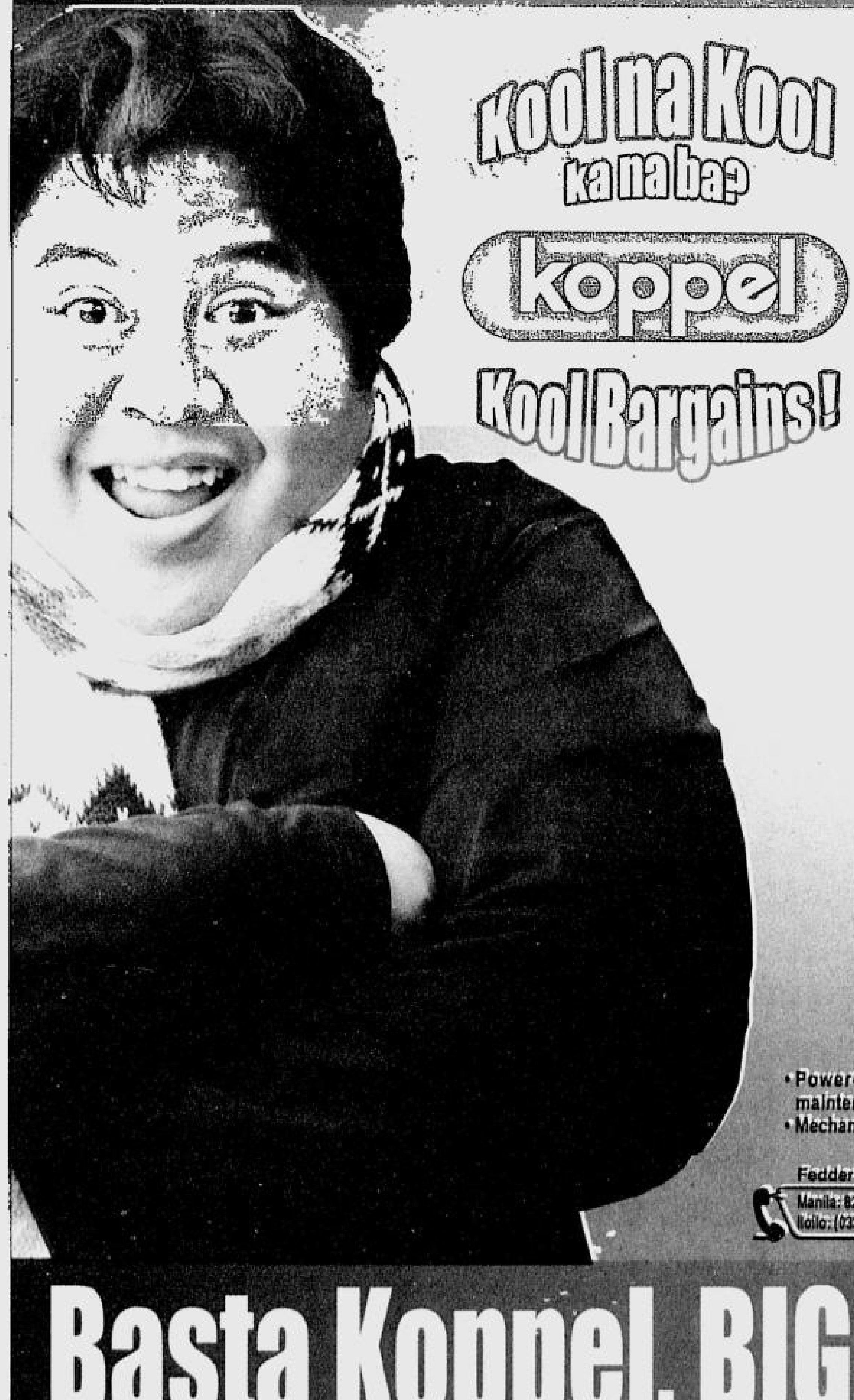
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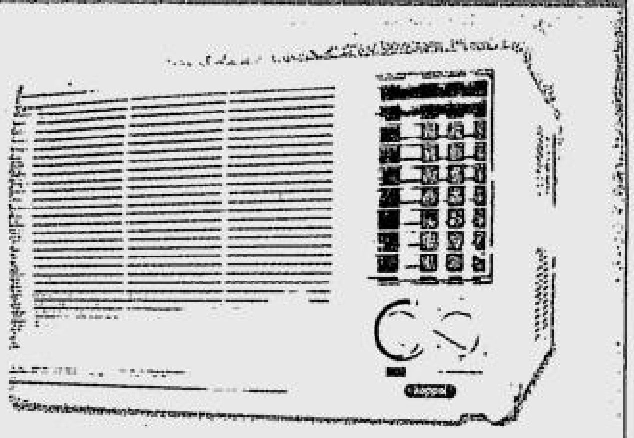

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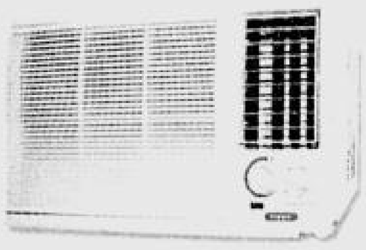

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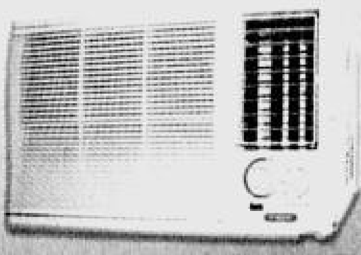

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Israelis snatch 2 Palestinian gunmen from hospital beds

NABLUS, West Bank—Israeli undercover troops snatched two wounded Palestinian gunmen from their West Bank hospital beds in a pre-dawn raid Tuesday, the latest Israeli military operation in the wake of a deadly bus bombing a week ago.

The troops knocked on the door of the intensive care unit, imposed curfew on the patients and doctors and carried the two men—members of the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, a militant group loosely affiliated with Yasser Arafat's Fatah faction—out of the ward and into military ambulances, according to a doctor who spoke on condition on anonymity.

The men—Othman Younis, 27, and Fahid Bani-Odeh, 25—are in Israel's Beilinson Hospital and being treated for moderate injuries, military sources said.

Israel accuses Younis of helping to plan several attacks in which at least 10 people were killed, including an Aug. 12 suicide bombing which came in the midst of a ceasefire declared by the militant groups on June 29.

The truce collapsed last Thursday after Israel killed a top-ranking Hamas political leader in retaliation for a Jerusalem bus bombing a week ago in which 21 people were killed.

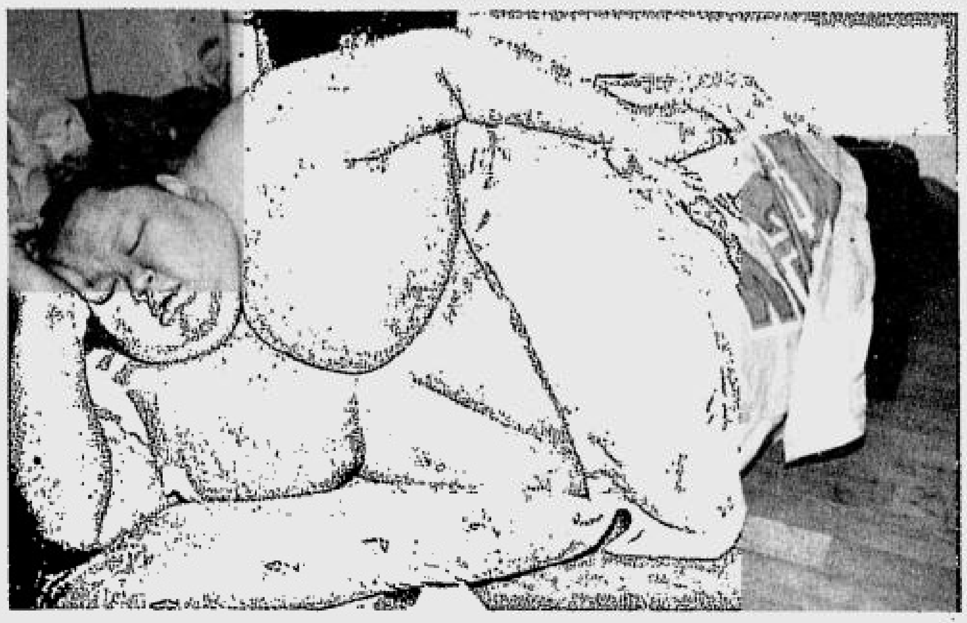
Since the bombing, Israel has killed two senior Hamas members—and another five activists in the group—in pinpoint missile strikes which marked the renewal of Israel's policy to hunt down and kill militants. Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Moshe Yaalon has made clear that all members of the militant group are targets for "liquidation."

The latest missile strike, on a Gaza beach front late Sunday, forced senior Hamas members to go into hiding, while the group's spokespersons turned off their phones. Hamas leaders were conspicuously absent from funerals Monday for the four men killed in Sunday's missile strike.

Hamas leaflets hung in mosques throughout the Gaza Strip instructed members to take precautions—such as not traveling in groups, avoiding use of their telephones, using make-up to disguise themselves and staying off main streets—so as not to be easy targets for Israeli "assassination."

US-backed Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas—who is trying to implement the so-called "road map" to Palestinian statehood—is also fighting off a campaign by Yasser Arafat to undermine him and reassert his authority over Palestinian security forces.

Most recently, Arafat appointed his former rival, Brig. Gen. Jibril Rajoub, to the vacant post of national security adviser. It was not clear that Arafat planned to use Rajoub to rein in militants and unify his security forces, two central demands in the US-backed road map. *AP*



TOO BIG TO MOVE

Lu Tsung-hsien, who weighs over 300 kg, lies on the floor of his home before he was taken to a hospital in Hsinchu on Aug. 26. Lu, 26, has developed skin problems after lying in bed for two weeks due to unknown illness. He has not been able to move because of his weight. AFP

Indons use F-16 jets to pound Aceh rebels

JAKARTA—Indonesian jet fighters pounded suspected rebel positions in Aceh province Tuesday while 18 guerrillas and a soldier were killed in fighting, officials said, signaling that the war between government forces and the separatists is escalating.

Three US-made F-16 fighter-bombers and three OV-10 Bronco counterinsurgency aircraft bombed and rocketed the slopes of Mount Seulawah, some 20 km south of the provincial capital of Banda Aceh, military spokesperson Lt. Col. Ahmad Yani Basuki said.

He said ground troops were later flown into the area by helicopter to pursue and encircle guerrillas of the Free Aceh Movement.

Rebel camps in the jungles near the town of Lhokseumawe—the site of a natural gas plant operated by US energy giant Exxon Mobil—also were pounded, Basuki said. The extent of casualties from the operation was not immediately known, he said.

But a rebel spokesperson said the Air Force was hitting empty hillsides, "because we are not there anymore."

Basuki said 18 rebels and one soldier died in separate battles elsewhere in the province of 4.1 million people on Sunday and Monday.

The rebel spokesperson, Tengku Jamaika, said it was impossible to say whether the fatalities reported by the Army were rebels or civilians.

Nearly 800 people have perished since Indonesia launched a massive military operation on May 19 against the Free Aceh Movement, which has been fighting for independence since 1976.

The military offensive ended a five-month ceasefire backed by the United States, Japan and other Western countries that was seen as the best chance for resolving the conflict.

A clampdown on the international media has made it difficult to verify official casualty claims. But Aceh rebels have said that most of the victims in the war were unarmed villagers executed by troops. International human rights groups have accused the Indonesian military of committing massive human rights violations in the province. *AP*

New Burma PM seen as scapegoat

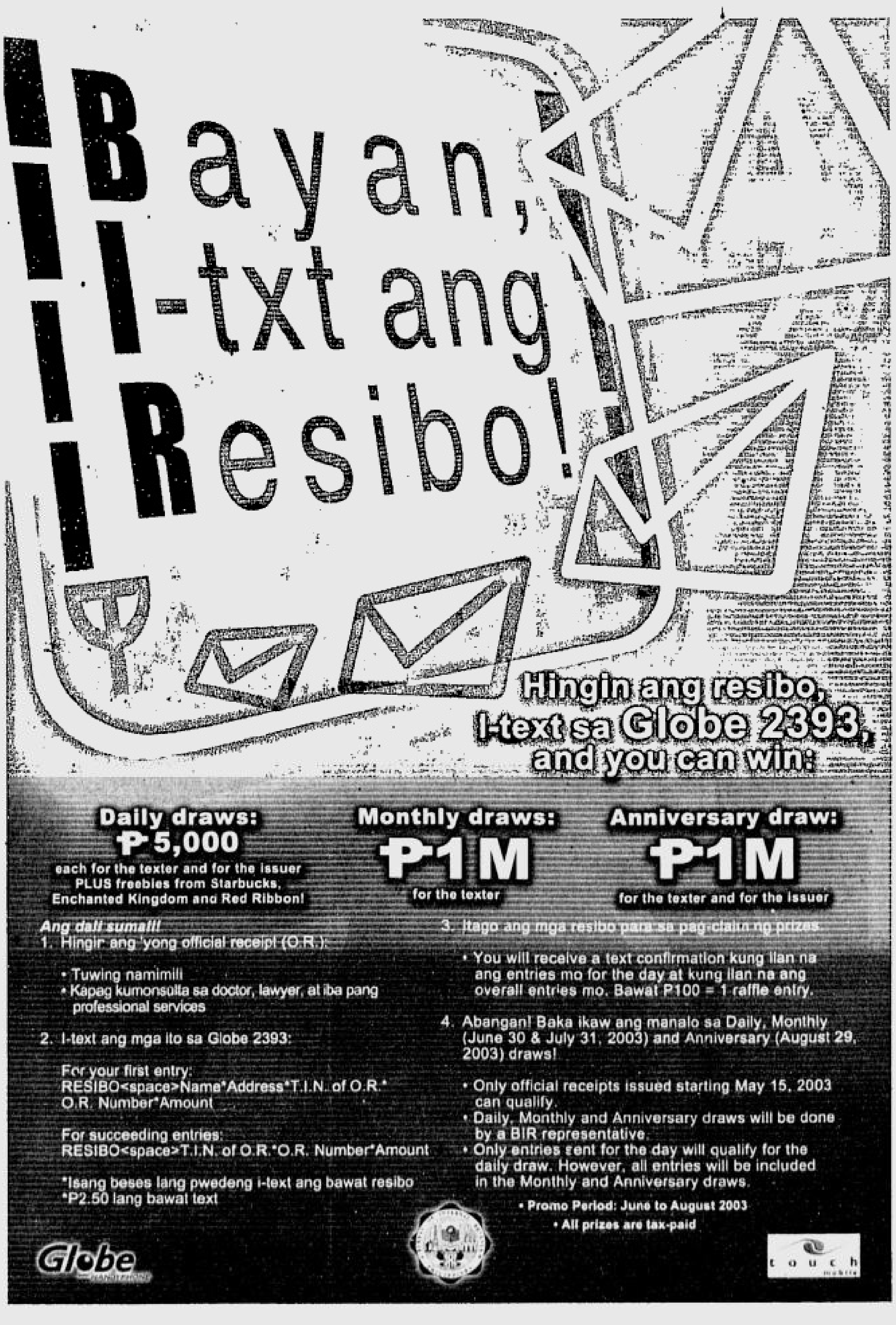
BANGKOK—A political reshuffle in Burma (Myanmar), where a moderate general has been installed as prime minister, is a bid to shift blame over the arrest of Aung San Suu Kyi and serious economic woes, analysts said Tuesday.

Observers say that by making military intelligence chief Gen. Khin Nyunt its new public face, the ruling junta hopes to end a deadlock with the international community over the opposition leader's detention since May.

Khin Nyunt is seen as a relatively urbane and outward-looking figure in a junta staffed by notoriously secretive, paranoid and uneducated military men who have run the economy into the ground and rendered it a pariah regime.

But after being axed from his role as Secretary One in the all-powerful State Peace and Development Council in the reshuffle announced on Monday, Khin Nyunt has little real power and will be a lame-duck head of government.

"It puts Khin Nyunt in a difficult position because although he is nominally in charge of the day-to-day running of the country, he is not going to be able to change policy," said Debbie Stothard from pressure group Altsean-Burma. "But if things go wrong, he will be the one who takes the blame." *AFP*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Thais awaken to canal peril

BANGKOK—On a humid monsoon night, shortly after midnight, Thailand's favorite pop star swerved off the road and plunged his black BMW into one of Bangkok's canals. He was pulled from the water with minor injuries, yet he is dying of a fungal brain infection.

The reason, doctors say, is that Bangkok's canal water is so dirty that when it seeped into his head wounds, it poisoned him and left him in a coma. The doctors say his chances of survival are slim.

The tragedy of Apichet Kittikorncharoen, 21-year lead singer with the band D2B, has embarrassed the government and awakened Thais to a peril in their midst that they have long preferred to ignore—the foul waters of the 20-odd klongs, or canals, that crisscross Bangkok.

Official studies show that bacteria contamination in all waterways is 75 to 400 times over the allowable limit.

"There's no question about it: Canals in Bangkok aren't dirty—they are filthy," said Vijarn Simachaya, water quality chief at the city's Pollution Control Department.

In the 19th century, the klongs feeding into the meandering Chao Phraya River were the city's streets, boats its main mode of transport, and "Venice of the East" its nickname. Three quarters of Bangkok's 400,000 inhabitants lived in houseboats and the rest in houses on stilts or on canal banks. The city center was the river itself.

An enduring image of Thailand is the floating markets—canals chockablock with wooden canoes laden with fruits and vegetables, paddled by women in conical hats.

But today, most of the canals have been filled for roads, houses and shops. Those that remain present a frightening sight: On its thick, brown water float dead animals, rusty pesticide cans, used condoms and chunks of rotting garbage.

A report by the Pollution Control Department found that Bangkok's nine major canals were "way too dangerous for any use except public transport," said Vijarn. The report has been sent to the Cabinet, which will discuss it soon, he said.

The city is now home to more than 10 million people and wheels are the conveyance of choice. But the canals still carry hundreds of thousands of commuters on motorized wooden boats.

The best way to beat Bangkok's maddening land traffic is to zip along in boats—if you don't mind the stench and the occasional splash from a boat swerving in the streams of sludge.

Waraporn Tangsukhum, 36, says she has suffered two serious fungi and bacterial infections on her ear and eyelids from the dirty water. She breaks out in itches from time to time. *AP*

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NPAs refuse to sign anti-landmine pact

MATI, Davao Oriental—An international group working for a total ban on the use of landmines said the New People's Army (NPA) has not violated any agreement outlawing the device.

Lawyer Soliman Santos, director of Geneva Call in Asia, told the INQUIRER that the rebel group has not yet signed any agreement about the non-use of landmines.

Earlier, Davao Oriental police director Senior Supt. Catalino Cuy lambasted the NPA after its guerrillas set-off a landmine during an ambush on Army engineers in Baganga town on Tuesday last week.

At least five soldiers were killed while another one was wounded during the attack.

"The New People's Army is breaking its earlier commitment with the Geneva Convention not to use landmines in its protracted war with the Philippine government. The Philippine government, being a signatory to the Geneva Convention, is no longer using landmines," Cuy said.

But Santos clarified that the communist rebels have not signed the Deeds of Commitment Under Geneva Call for Adherence to a Total Ban on Anti-personnel Landmines.

"The NPA has not yet entered into such deed of commitment but Geneva Call hopes it does so in the near future," he said.

The communists, however, said they were not about to give up the use of landmines.

In a statement sent to the Geneva Call, a copy of which was furnished the INQUIRER, the Communist Party of the Philippines, the NPA's umbrella group, said there should first be a ban on the manufacture of the device.

"Depriving us of the use of these command-detonated landmines will further favor the reactionary Armed Forces of the Philippines, which already enjoys overwhelming advantage over the NPA in terms of number, arms and logistics, and which the US government trains and supplies," the statement read.

Meanwhile, the resurgence of violence in the province has displaced hundreds of civilians, mostly members of the indigenous communities.

Since Wednesday afternoon, Mandaya *lumad* from Baganga fled to safer grounds to avoid being caught in the crossfire. *Ferdinand Zuasola, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

CLAY POT FEAST NINO JESUS ORBETA, PDI SOUTHERN LUZON BUREAU

Girls wearing bright-colored costumes light up the streets of Tiwi, Albay during the town's celebration of the Coron (clay pot) Festival. Clay pot making is one of Tiwi's major industries.

Gov tells US execs peace pact with MILF should benefit masses

COTABATO CITY—North Cotabato Gov. Emmanuel Piñol said any peace pact entered with the Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) should redound to the development of the Moro masses and not for rebel leaders alone.

"We are not against the peace process in Mindanao contrary to what other people perceive us to be, but we want a peace agreement that will benefit and will participated in by the masses," Piñol told US officials, led by former US Ambassador to the Philippines Richard Murphy.

Murphy met with Central Mindanao officials during a visit last week in connection with the peace process.

Piñol cited the Philippine experience with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

He said although the rebel group signed a peace deal in 1996, many of its members continued their armed struggle.

Some of its members have either joined the MILF or the Abu Sayyaf.

"We should learn from the mistakes of the past," Piñol said.

He said that after the peace agreement was signed and the government and funding agencies released millions of pesos in funds, the "majority of the Moro people remained in the same state of poverty and deprivation." *Charlie Señase and Rosa-May de Guzman, PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Electronics firms fear terror bill

BAGUIO CITY—More critics of the controversial anti-terrorism measure are coming from an unlikely sector—the semiconductor and electronics industry.

Norberto Viera Jr., president of Texas Instruments Philippines Inc. (Tipi), said proposed laws that further regulate chemical compounds that the government classifies as ingredients for homemade bombs would interfere with the shipment of ingredients that are essential to semiconductor manufacturers.

The consolidated measure on counter-terrorism includes a version that seeks tighter controls on the importation and distribution of house or farm chemicals like ordinary pesticides.

Congress is still studying the unified anti-terror measure, which President Macapagal-Arroyo has identified as a priority bill.

Viera said the distribution of nitric acid is being controlled by the government partly in response to international fears that the terrorist network al-Qaida operates in Southeast Asia through local extremist groups.

Nitric acid is used as a bonding and cleansing agent by Tipi and in mining operations.

Viera is president of the Semiconductor and Electronics Industry of the Philippines Inc. (Seipi), which has 800 members in the country.

He said Tipi and most Seipi members are confused by laws that were drawn up without recognizing their "fundamental impact on multinational firms."

Viera stressed the relevance of semiconductor firms by noting that 35 percent of the country's exports contribute to the Gross National Product (GNP).

Electronics supply 69 percent of all products exported by the country, overtaking even garments, which represent 6 percent.

"(Labor Secretary Patricia) Sto. Tomas assumed that garments take the lead in exports, but the figures will show (the country relies on) electronics . . . We depend on only one product and that is problematic," he said.

Semiconductor firms' overall investment of $40 million in 1992 peaked in 1995. *Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Lina disputes Barbers on prospect of RP becoming drug capital

BACOLOD CITY—There is no reason to believe that the country will become the drug capital of Asia because the government is enforcing a relentless campaign against the drug menace, said Local Governments Secretary Jose Lina Jr. on Monday.

Lina was reacting to the warning of Sen. Robert Barbers that the country could become Asia's drug capital in five years if the drug problem would not be contained.

"We are pursuing the anti-drug campaign with vigor, there is no let-up in the anti-drug campaign," said Lina, who was in Bacolod to speak at a seminar on "Excellence in Public Service and Righteous Leadership."

The secretary said that in the last two months, the government's intensified campaign against illegal drugs had resulted in the dismantling of five shabu laboratories and the arrest of almost 6,000 drug users and peddlers.

President Macapagal-Arroyo, he added, has set aside a P1 billion standby fund, the biggest amount so far set aside by a president of the country, in the fight against illegal drugs.

Lina also pointed out that the Comprehensive Dangerous Drugs Act of 2002, which took effect July 4, 2002 and which Senator Barbers helped craft, strengthened the campaign against illegal drugs, he said.

"I think we have so much to show in the campaign against illegal drugs . . . There is no reason to believe we will reach the state where it will be faced with an illegal drug problem like (in) Colombia," he said.

Lina noted that in Colombia, justices and high-ranking officials are being murdered with impunity by drug lords.

"Thank God we are producing results in the campaign against illegal drugs in the country," said Lina, who chairs the Dangerous Drugs Board.

Drug testing for students will start in September, he said, while drug testing for the police, the military and other law enforcement agencies will continue.

Those running for elective positions or who are going to be appointed to government positions will also undergo mandatory drug testing, he said.

"Almost all agencies of government are now involved in the campaign against drugs, so I think we are on the right track," he said.

"We have reason to be hopeful and optimistic that we will be able to make a dent in the fight against illegal drugs," he added. *Carla Gomez, PDI Visayas Bureau*

5 Isabela Army officers probed for mutiny role

CAMP MELCHOR DE LA CRUZ, Isabela—Five Army officers belonging to the 5th Infantry Division based here have been placed under investigation for their possible involvement in the failed July 27 mutiny, an Army officer said.

Maj. Rogelio Migote, 5th ID spokesperson, identified one of the officers as 1Lt. Angelbert Gay of the 21st Infantry Battalion and a member of the Philippine Military Academy "Kalasag-Lahi" Class of 1997.

Migote, however, declined to identify the four other officers being investigated for supposedly helping the mutiny leaders by giving them "moral support" and encouragement.

"Any show of support for the mutineers is being investigated. Even extending moral support is condemnable and considered a violation of their duties and responsibilities. We are also investigating to what extent these officers helped the mutineers," he said.

He assured reporters that Army officials would release their findings as soon as the investigation is completed.

Migote said the Army officers, while under investigation, were pulled out from their field assignments and were placed at the 5th ID barracks "under restricted confinement." *Villamor Visaya Jr., PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

Suspect in journalist's killing tagged fall guy

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Laguna police chief Senior Supt. Edwin Corvera yesterday presented to the media the alleged gunman in the killing last week of local columnist-broadcaster Noel Villarante.

But the suspect, Senando Palumbarit, 42, of Barangay Sta. Clara Norte, Pila, Laguna, denied he was involved in the murder.

Laguna-based media persons who knew the suspect also said police made Palumbarit the fall guy to avoid the ire of journalists.

Corvera said Palumbarit resembles the artist's sketch of the alleged gunman.

The victim's wife, Jocelyn, also positively identified the suspect as the one who shot her husband, Corvera told the INQUIRER.

Palumbarit was crying when he was presented to the media as he insisted that he had nothing to do with the killing.

"They know I have nothing to do with this. My friends know who I am," Palumbarit said.

He said the police went to his house and offered him a job as a narcotics agent for the Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency.

Because he knew the "arresting officers," he immediately "followed their request to go to the provincial police headquarters" in Sta. Cruz, he said.

He pleaded to the media to be vigilant about the case and not to leave him. He said he feared for his life and his family's.

He revealed that he was a former civilian agent and had worked for the Laguna police.

He also admitted that he knew Villarante because the slain reporter was also a former civilian agent.

"I know Villarante. I know that he was a reporter. He is my brother in the Guardians (Brotherhood Inc.). How then would I kill him? I have nothing against him," the suspect said.

He said he knew the police officials who are trying to pin him down to the murder case.

Some newsmen who knew the victim suspected that police used Palumbarit as a "fall guy" to avoid the ire of media men.

Journalist Union of Southern Tagalog president Rene Alviar said the suspect was a "runner and striker" of some policemen.

"I often see him inside the police camp in Sta. Cruz. He was an errand boy of some police officers. He had also worked as civilian agent. His arrest is somewhat questionable," Alviar said.

He said Jocelyn's statement is questionable since she claimed that the suspect who shot her husband was wearing stockings on his head. "How could anyone recognize a person wearing stockings on his head," he asked.

Corvera admitted that Palumbarit was indeed a former agent but was expelled after allegedly extorting money from business firms. *Marlon Ramos, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

2 tabloid personnel post bail for libel charges

By Chito A. Fuentes
PDI Visayas Bureau

TAGBILARAN CITY—Two staff members of Bohol's first Cebuano tabloid posted bail bonds of P10,000 each after a warrant were issued for their arrest in connection with a libel case filed against them by Gov. Erico Aumentado.

Venuso Arigo and Reigh Monreal, chief of reporters and managing editor of Atong Balita Sano (ABS), posted bail even before the arrest warrants issued against them could be served.

The warrants were issued by Judge Pablo Magdoza of the Regional Trial Court (RTC) Branch 48 based in Tagbilaran City.

The ABS reported that when the bail pay proofs were already filed in court, Magdoza issued another order on the same day ordering the clerk of court to commit Arigo and Monreal to the City of Tagbilaran Rehabilitation Center (CTRC) in Cabawan District.

On the same day, Magdoza also issued another order for the release of the two journalists from the CTRC.

Arigo said Magdoza explained to him and Monreal that this was done to comply with the process provided for in such cases.

Aumentado, a former journalist, earlier filed a libel case against Arigo, Monreal and former Gov. Rene Relampagos in connection with the publication of two stories written by Arigo in the Oct. 10, 2002 issue of ABS.

The governor had resented the banner story "Opisyal sa Capitolyo Target sa NPA (Capitol official NPA target)."

In the story, Arigo wrote in Cebuano that "there is doubt as to the truth in the reported inclusion of the governor in the hit list of the leftist rebellion since Aumentado himself had constantly publicized his programs for the forgotten sector of society."

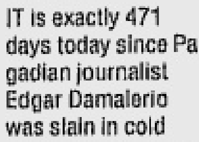
Aumentado also resented another story in the same issue titled "Naglasa-lasa gyud diay ang P53M equipment deal (P53M equipment deal greasy)."

Arigo's second story said that "when the governor mentioned about 'kickback' in his letter, it revived the allegations of contractors that there are some politicians who are receiving a 10 percent commission."

The governor included Relampagos in the charge sheet because Relampagos allegedly is the real owner of ABS.

In filing the libel case, Prosecutor Romeo Chatto of the City Prosecutor's Office quoted the Revised Penal Code stressing that the law "makes no distinction whether the subject of the libelous statement is a public official or a private individual."

Countdown for Justice



WAPILE

IT is exactly 471 days today since Pagadian journalist Edgar Damalerio was slain in cold blood. The principal suspect, police officer Guillermo Wapile, remains at large after escaping while in the custody of the police.

Share in nat'l wealth seen way to stop logging

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya—The mayor of Alfonso Castañeda town has asked the national government to fast track the guidelines on the release of local governments' share from the national wealth over the operation of the Casecnan Multi-purpose Irrigation and Power Project (CMIPP).

Mayor Alfredo Castillo Jr. said most Bugkalots in the affected villages within the project site have no alternative jobs but to cut lumber and sell these to lowland traders.

He said the local government share from the national wealth would also help Bugkalots fight a malaria outbreak in their community.

"We do not have anymore benefits other than our share from the national wealth. We only have to contend with strict prohibitions imposed on us after the operation of the Casecnan project because it is already a protected area," he said.

Castillo said they could use money from the national government to provide jobs for the Bugkalots. "If we do not have this, where can we get funds to create livelihood projects for them," he said.

He said there was a need to offer alternative jobs to the Bugkalots living in the Casecnan area to divert them from illegal forest practices to preserve the CMIPP Watershed.

Ben Moses Ebreo, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

ANTI-GMA PROTESTS

CHR sets probe of rallies' dispersal

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
PDI Visayas Bureau

ILOILO CITY—The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) in Western Visayas is investigating possible human rights violations committed by law enforcers in the violent dispersal of protesters during recent visits of President Macapagal-Arroyo here.

The CHR said they would come up with a report on its findings within a month to determine if members of the Philippine National Police, civilian volunteers and members of the Bantay Bayan Foundation violated the rights of the protesters during the dispersals on July 14 and Aug. 14.

"We are checking whether (or not) the dispersals were an affront on the people's right to peaceful assembly," said Chris Montano, public information officer of the CHR in Western Visayas.

Leaders of the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan), the party-list group Bayan Muna and other militant groups met with a team of CHR investigators on Aug. 21 to file their complaint against police officials headed by Senior Supt. Policarpio Segubre, Iloilo City police director.

They included Supt. Alfonso Mardoquio, city police precinct commander; Senior Insp. Uldarico Garbanzos, Mandurriao District precinct commander; and three other policemen in the complaint.

The police officials were in charge of about 200 policemen, civilian volunteers and Bantay Bayan members that dispersed around 100 protesters on July 14 near the Barcelo Sarabia Manor Hotel where the President stayed overnight.

Welcome

Segubre said he had not been notified of the investigation but said the police welcomed it to determine if there were violations.

"We exercised maximum tolerance (against the protesters) but we will not allow contemptuous shouts and slogans against the President," he told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

He said he was not present during the dispersal because he was "busy escorting the President."

Six protesters were hurt, two of whom were taken to the Iloilo Doctors Hospital, during the dispersal on July 14.

Police also detained six protesters at the city precinct.

Protesters filed charges for injuries against the police.

In the Aug. 14 dispersal, Hannah Grace Superio, Iloilo coordinator of Bayan Muna, was taken to the Western Visayas State University Hospital after PO3 Fidel Mosquito sprayed tear gas on her while she spoke on top of a jeepney.

13 execs cleared of smuggling raps not scot-free yet

BUTUAN CITY—Chief graft buster Simeon Marcelo reversed the controversial ruling of the Ombudsman Mindanao that cleared at least 13 police and customs officials in Caraga of responsibility for the disappearance of a ship loaded with contraband from the Masao Port here in July last year.

Marcelo in his July 30 order, a copy of which was furnished the INQUIRER on Friday, said contrary to the findings of the Ombudsman Mindanao, there was sufficient ground to prosecute the officials for graft because they failed to prevent MV Rodeo from sailing out of the port.

Police and National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) agents held the ship after it was found that the P18.7-million imported rice it was ferrying lacked documents.

But shortly after the seizure was declared, the ship sailed out of Butuan. A few days later, it was found in Cebu but was already marked with a different identification.

"There [illegible] gross inexcusable negligence for their fail[illegible] provide adequate security to the vessel [illegible] eventually escaped," Marcelo said of his [illegible] against the officials.

Marcelo [illegible] charges against Coast Guard [illegible] Senior Supt. Efren Anggo, Supt. Felix Gonzales, Senior Insp. Reynaldo Batoon, SPO4 Domingo Lucero Jr., PO3 Ignacio Espina, PO2 Jessie Doce, and Insp. Adriano Bustillo Sr., Chief petty officer Adelard[illegible] Hernandez, PO2 Jeffrey Jumawan and PO1 Nestor Almeda shall be pursued.

Other officials charged before the Sandiganbayan were customs collectors Diego Ochimar Jr. and Jose Patrina Sr. and Masao ports terminal supervisor Edgardo Tidalgo.

Instead of working together, Marcelo said the 13 officials blamed each other and "took no responsibility for the escape of the subject vessel wi[illegible] cargo."

Marcelo [illegible] the arrest of the officials and recommended a bail bond of P30,00[illegible]

Reynaldo Esmeralda, then deputy regional director of the NBI in Caraga, who spearheaded the filing of the case, said the decision had vindicated their effort against "hoodlums in uniform coddling illegal smugglers."

"It's a triumph for justice after all, we are vindicated by this development," Esmeralda, now NBI director for Region 7, told the INQUIRER.

Chief Supt. Alberto Olario, Caraga police director, announced that his men would file a motion of reconsideration against Marcelo's order.

Franklin Caliguid, PDI Mindanao Bureau

Funds for judges' offices exhausted

DUMAGUETE CITY—A respectable, suitable and decent courthouse. This is the dream of the Department of Justice for its judges in Negros Oriental, which will be realized with the completion of the two-story Palace of Justice.

However, there's a problem that keeps the DOJ from fulfilling its dream: Money. The lack of it, that is.

Justice Undersecretary Jose Calida, on a visit to Dumaguete to address the Silliman University Law Alumni Convocation, said he has been informed that the Palace of Justice in Negros Oriental is almost finished but that funds for its construction have already run out.

The new building is located along A.J. Blanco Road in the northern side of this city. Constructed in 2000 with a budget of P86 million, the building [illegible] now 80 percent complete.

"I will relay this matter to the (justice) secretary and this is timely because the budget hearings will start in two weeks so we will lobby for more funding from Congress," Calida said.

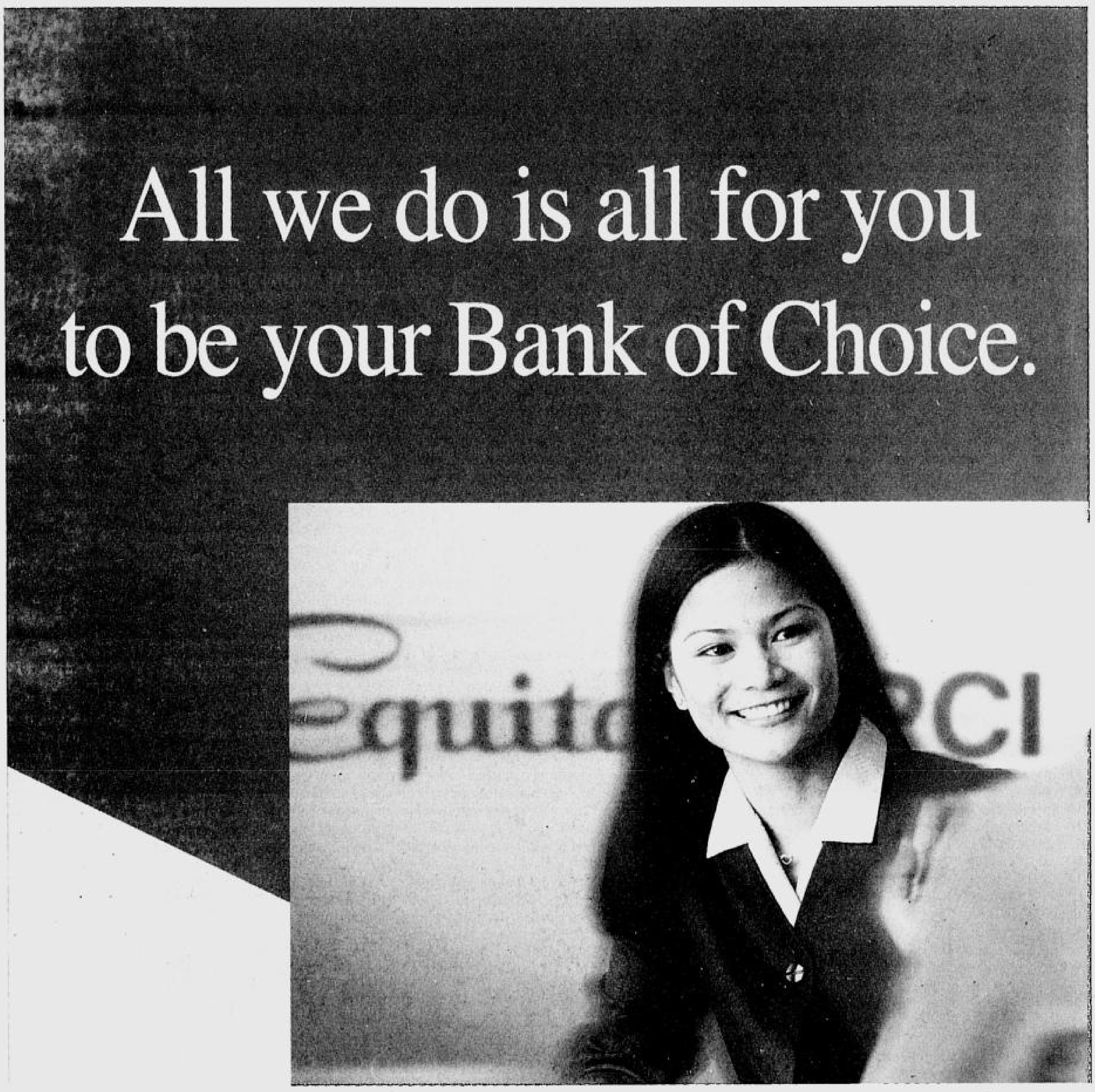
Calida, in a press conference, also spoke about the charges they are preparing against the more than 300 soldiers who staged a mutiny against the Arroyo administration last July 27.

Calida heads the team of prosecutors for the soldiers, known as the Oakwood mutineers.

He said the main challenge of the prosecution is to establish a motive for all the mutineers.

Calida was accompanied by SU Law Dean Myles Nicolas Bejar and former IBP president and Kiwanis District Gov. Eduardo Sedillo.

Alex Pal, PDI Visayas Bureau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INQUIRER Northern Luzon

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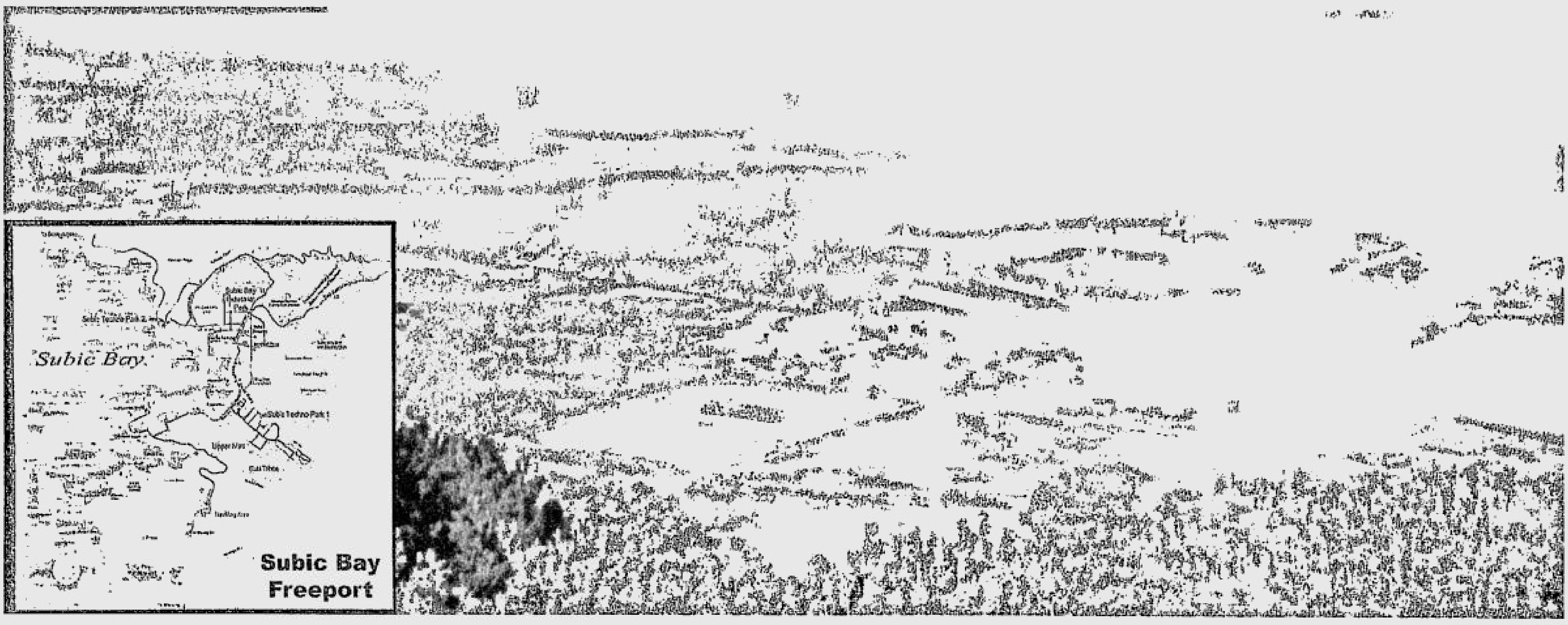


CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

Harmonizing nature and business

By Tonette Orejas
Subic Bay Freeport

As the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority bids to link the Philippines to global trade through its $215-million seaport project, the state-owned agency converting the former American naval base into a premier economic zone now finds itself dealing with investors who support the flagship plan but becoming vigilant of the environment as well.

Harmonizing nature and business continues to be SBMA's challenge.

PICTURE this: 67,000 hectares are 90 percent mountains and rainforests that are home to numerous wildlife species and flora. Far below is a limited expanse of flatland spanning some 6,700 hectares hosting an import-export business district.

The area is hemmed by Subic Bay that, aside from having a deep harbor, is also habitat to coral reefs, sea grasses and, by the latest estimate, 75 species of fish and endangered turtles. This, in its entirety, is the Subic Bay Freeport Zone.

From the 16th century to 1991, the area was entirely for foreign military use. The bay's deep harbor drew the Spanish fleet to set up a coaling station and arsenal.

In 1898, the American military built Subic Naval Base, the largest and most logistically complex in this part of the Asia-Pacific. Its seaport and airport were its central facilities. The Japanese Imperial Army briefly seized the naval base during World War II.

Since 1992, when the Philippine government reclaimed the base and converted it into an economic zone from what the US Navy had left behind, the bay's deep harbor continued to show industrial potentials, according to Felicito Payumo, SBMA chair.

The ecological diversity of the area and its economic opportunities were not lost on the framers of Republic Act 7227 or the bases conversion law, according to Payumo, one of the law's co-authors.

Payumo, the former representative of the first district of Bataan, said the law envisioned the freeport as a "self-sustaining industrial, commercial, financial and tourism center while protecting the critical ecology of the area."

By 1995, Payumo, then chair of the House of Representatives' committee on economic affairs, said he helped draw up the Central Luzon development plan (CLDP) that conceived the Subic port development plan as a priority infrastructure in the region.

In August 1999, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, which also funded the CLDP study, completed the Subic Bay port master plan.

A year later, the Japan Bank for International Cooperation approved the 16.45-billion yen ($215 million) loan for an expanded bulk and container port at the Leyte wharf in Cubi Point. This site is near the Subic Bay International Airport, the hub of international cargo handler Federal Express.

The facility intends to handle up to 900,000 TEUs (20 equivalent units of 20-foot containers) yearly. A P600-million bulk grain facility and a P360-million fertilizer terminal are also going to rise there, Payumo said.

The development of this port, he said, will turn the freeport into a major transshipment hub serving the Asia-Pacific region. It will also support the economic growth of the neighboring regions of Metro Manila, and Central and Northern Luzon in the next 50 years.

The project comes at a time when the capacities of seaports in neighboring countries are becoming limited and about 90 percent of world trade travels by sea, Payumo said.

Smack in the middle of the Asia-Pacific region, the freeport and its deep harbor are within easy distance of Japan, South Korea, China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Vietnam, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and Papua New Guinea.

Conflict

At the existing Subic port district along Argonaut Highway, the International Container Terminal Services Inc. and the Royal Ports installed a gantry crane. This has increased the cargo handling capacity from 20,000 TEUs to 100,000 TEUs annually since 2000, a report said.

The port project at Cubi Point has had rough sailing, though. The Subic Bay Freeport Chamber of Commerce (SBFCC), for one, has taken a critical stance.

Generally, however, the chamber views the port project as "excellent and beneficial" to the economy.

"The port development project management should integrate their project with the protection of the environment and the protection of existing investors, within the guidelines and spirit of the (Subic Bay) protected area management plan (PAMP)," SBFCC chair Jose Saddul said in a statement.

Cubi Point is close to the marine protected areas of Grande Island, Triboa, Ilanin and Nabasan Bays. Several companies, many of them tourism-based investors, also operate their businesses close to this zone.

Saddul said the proximity of the project site to the protected zone and the project's construction and operation activities are expected to "degrade" the forest, the sea and the air, including the visual appeal of this part of the bay.

The container yard alone will require a reclamation area of 29.2 hectares filled with 1.8 million cubic meters of soil over a five-year period, according to the project study.

Saddul said the proponents—the SBMA's finance-assisted project office and its seaport department—and the environmental consultants presented information in "fragmentary and incomplete fashion in public hearings."

Many members, he said, believed that the information either "understated the risks or incorrectly showed some affected areas to be of limited environmental significance."

The PAMP, completed in December 2001, and a survey by a private company early this year suggest that there are more than seven different species of sea grasses at Cubi Point and not only two, as the project's environmental impact study cited.

"There is a paucity of information on impacts of dredging on the adjacent sea grass beds and other downstream ecosystem, including no information on how the dredge spoils will be addressed," the survey said.

The SBFCC asked the SBMA to get written guarantees from the proponents on the following concerns:

* The dust generated during construction will be controlled completely (to avoid) operational hazard to aircraft.

* No dredged material will be dumped within the bay.

* The port development plan will be amended to ensure that the Nabasan and Camayan wharves will not be used for ocean-going ships, cruise ships, ro-ro (roll on-roll off vessel), or general cargo at any time in the future. Vessels permitted will be limited to passenger ferries not exceeding 200 people.

* The proponents will provide concrete proposals to demonstrate that there will be effective control of the contractors to guarantee that the environmental compliance certificate (ECC) is complied with.

* The proponents will provide environmental damage remediation and compensation for affected locators. An escrow account provision of at least 7.5 percent of the contract sum (well within international norms) would address the concerns of the membership.

"Most (members) are concerned about collateral damage to the environment and to existing businesses," Saddul explained.

Relocate

Guy Hilbero, vice president of the Environmental Protection of Asia (EPA), urged the House special committee on bases conversion chaired by Zambales Rep. James Gordon Jr. to order the reassessment of the project and its relocation.

Hilbero, in documents submitted to the committee, did not propose a relocation site within or outside the freeport. Saddul clarified the SFBCC did not recommend relocation.

Fishers in Morong, Bataan and Subic, Zambales have also expressed worry over the project, noting that Cubi Point and the smaller bays are spawning ground for fishes.

Swamped with complaints, Payumo's assurance was: "There will be mitigating measures." But he sounded off determination to pursue the project. "Subic, then and now, is a port more than anything else," he said.

Long and winding journey to separate lives for Kalinga twins

By Cristina Arzadon
in Hualien, Taiwan

THE JOURNEY to separate lives for Siamese twins Rachel Sunset and Lea Grace Awel was literally long and winding. Born conjoined at the chest and abdomen in Pasil, Kalinga, in July last year, the Awel twins began breathing as separate individuals three days before marking their first birthday across the seas in Hualien, Taiwan.

The separation procedure was conducted on June 28 at the Tzu Chi Medical Center in Hualien, the heart of Tzu Chi Buddhist charitable foundation and the home of founder, female Master Cheng Yen.

Foundation volunteers called it an accidental meeting, but the encounter between the Awel twins and their benefactors, the Tzu Chi missionary foundation, was made in heaven.

The 37-year-old charitable group had conducted previous medical missions in the country from Aparri, Cagayan in Luzon to General Santos City in Mindanao.

The road to becoming separate individuals for Rachel and Lea began at the Kalinga Provincial Hospital where the twins were initially taken for observation.

Born to farming couple Marieta and Andy, the twins first caught the attention of Kalinga Gov. Macario Duguiang, who immediately started pooling funds to support the children's separation operation.

The twins were later taken to the Philippine Children's Medical Center in Quezon City for another series of tests.

"We were meant to meet. That is what we call affinity. These children have affinity with the Tzu Chi in their past lives, otherwise, it was highly improbable that we meet them," said Alfredo Li, a Tzu Chi volunteer who met the twins in February.

THE AWEL twins after their successful separation surgery in Taiwan.
PHOTO COURTESY OF TZU CHI FOUNDATION

Volunteers were assisting another patient at the PCMC when they discovered the Awels. After "accidentally" discovering the Awels at the PCMC, Li flew to Taiwan and reported the twins' case to Tzu Chi founder Master Cheng. The twins were confined at the PCMC for a series of tests before they were to undergo surgery.

At that time, Master Cheng was also sending two doctors from Hualien to the Philippines to assess the condition of another Siamese twins from Jolo.

The Jolo twins were originally scheduled to receive surgery but later tests revealed that they shared one heart making the separation procedure difficult and impossible. The doctors later ruled out surgery for the Jolo twins.

"When we came back (from Taiwan), we looked for the Awels but they were already out of the hospital. We then asked their contact numbers and we called them from the Kalinga hospital," Li said.

The twins were then arranged to meet the Tzu Chi doctors in Manila for yet another series of examinations. The tests showed that except for a fused liver, Rachel and Lea had different sets of organs making the operation's survival rate at 70 percent.

The Awels flew to Taiwan on April 16 and were confined at the Tzu Chi hospital where they stayed until after the operation.

President Macapagal-Arroyo was among the twins' patrons who provided $1,000 (P55,240) for their financial needs.

The twins' mother was always tearful recalling how the group embraced them and treated them like family members from the day they arrived in Hualien.

"I am deeply touched by the shower of affection from people who are completely strangers to us, yet treated us like one of their own," Marieta said.

She said a lesson she learned from the whole experience was the need to spread the love to one another regardless of faith, belief and one's status in life.

She said she would teach the twins the same lesson when they grow up. "One day, I will tell them a great story about how people unknown to them have given them a new life. We are very grateful to the Tzu Chi members for taking care of my children," she said.

The twins were flown back to the country on Aug. 21 and reunited with their father Andy whom they had not seen for more than four months.

GMA blames politics, coup try

From page A1

ment reforms.

Presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye said the government was taking action to stop the peso currency's slide and was urging citizens to help by refraining from currency speculation.

Political and security jitters worsened following a daring daylight heist Monday by heavily armed men at a Citibank branch in Manila's Makati financial district, traders said.

Bunye cited as factors in the peso's slide last month's failed military mutiny, falling national reserves and a Court of Appeals order suspending Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Rafael Buenaventura and other BSP officials in connection with the closure of Urban Bank.

First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo has also been accused by opposition Sen. Panfilo Lacson of money laundering and corruption. Ms Macapagal's husband has denied any wrongdoing, but the Senate has said it will investigate the charge.

Taking action

"The important thing is we are taking action to neutralize or reverse this trend," Bunye told government radio station dzRB. He didn't elaborate.

"What we can do as citizens to help is to reduce speculation on our own currency," he said, pointing to businessmen "who are buying one year's supply of dollars … not knowing that moves like these will affect us all."

With the peso's steep decline, the 30-company Philippine Stock Exchange Index shed 13.25 points, or one percent, to close at 1,248.85 after rising Monday by 16.76 points. The broader All Shares Index also closed 8.49 points lower at 781.90 after gaining 5.90 points Monday. Losers swamped gainers 11 to 41, with 40 issues unchanged.

"We expected the market to be under pressure because of the weak peso which could result in higher interest rates and a host of other problems for the economy," Jose Vistan, economist at AB Capital Securities, told Dow Jones Newswires.

Analysts said the stock market would likely move within a narrow band Wednesday as investors await the result of the central bank's Monetary Board meeting and the release of second quarter economic data, both scheduled for Thursday.

A CLERK counts dollars at a money changer shop in Manila Tuesday. REUTERS

Market participants were waiting to see whether the central bank would raise interest rates to support the sagging peso, and whether the economy evaded a recession in the second quarter.

Dealers warned that without central bank support, the peso could easily hit its all-time low of 55.750 on Jan. 17, 2001, or three days before then President Joseph Estrada was ousted in Edsa II.

"We are trading on our own domestic problems. Lingering rumors that another coup attempt may take place anytime is further weighing on the currency," a local bank dealer said.

Another dealer said: "The central bank is not in the market because they apparently know the demand (for the dollar) is legitimate."

But the dollar has also reached "overbought levels, and is due for correction," soon, another dealer said.

Camacho's advice

For his part, Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho advised those holding dollars to convert these into pesos, saying the local currency had been undervalued.

Camacho also said pressure on the peso was expected to ease today when BSP Governor Buenaventura reports for work after attending a two-week seminar in the United States.

BSP Deputy Governor Alberto Reyes and retired Director Tomas Aure yesterday filed a motion for reconsideration against the Court of Appeals suspension order that have rattled financial markets.

The one-year suspension of Buenaventura, Reyes, Aure and other BSP officials over the closure of Urban Bank and two of its units three years ago cannot take effect until all appeals have been exhausted.

In a motion for reconsideration, Reyes and Aure argued the Court of Appeals erred in ruling that the central bankers failed to exercise due care in ordering the permanent closure of the medium-sized commercial bank and its subsidiaries.

The three companies were shut down and put under receivership a day after Urban Bank told the central bank it was suffering liquidity problems in the wake of big withdrawals.

"There is absolutely no basis for the conclusion of the Court of Appeals that the extraordinary diligence required by law before closing Urban Bank (and its subsidiaries) was simply ignored and disregarded," Reyes and Aure said in their motion.

Buenaventura and the other officials are expected to lodge their own appeals by the end of this week.

Reyes and Aure said the actions by the officials were in full compliance with the new central bank act.

"It is crystal clear that the legal basis for the closure of Urban Bank was its failure to pay liabilities as they become due in the ordinary course of business and that it cannot continue in business without involving probable losses to its depositors or creditors," they said. *Reports from Gil Cabacungan Jr., Clarissa S. Batino, AP, AFP and Reuters*

GMA may reconsider …

From page A1

Pangulong GMA ay tatakbo pa rin (Believe me, President GMA will still run)," Perez told Lakas members during a party regional meeting yesterday at the residence of Lakas Bicol chair Imelda C. Roces.

The Lakas members were urging Ms Macapagal to make up her mind soon.

"We have no choice … but to support Roco if the President (maintains) her earlier stand (not to run)," said Sorsogon Rep. Jose Solis Jr.

Solis, however, still hoped Ms Macapagal would run because she could help reverse what he called Bicol's status of being the country's second poorest region.

Camarines Norte Rep. Renato Unico said Bicol political leaders wanted Ms Macapagal to decide "at the soonest possible time" or else they would have to back "a Bicolano who could (help) make both ends meet for the *oragons*."

"We (will) have no choice but to help Raul Roco, (because) he is a Bicolano and (for) no other reason," Unico said.

Camarines Sur Rep. Felix Alfelor Jr. said Bicolanos had long been abandoned by the administration and their only remedy was to support somebody from Bicol, referring to Roco.

Sorsogon Gov. Raul Lee said Ms Macapagal could still show she cares for Bicolanos should she run in 2004.

Lee said the President could count on him and Camarines Sur Gov. Luis Villafuerte for support.

Should the President be firm on her stand not to run, Bicolano leaders said they would urge Lakas officials to invite Roco to the party and push for his candidacy to ensure a Lakas win in 2004.

Perez, who is Lakas secretary general, told the INQUIRER that during his regional visits, he had been receiving an increasing clamor asking the President to reconsider her decision not to run in 2004.

In a July 25-Aug. 6 national survey by Pulse Asia Inc., Ms Macapagal was running a close second to Sen. Noli de Castro. If elections were held now, 21 percent of respondents said they would vote for Ms Macapagal compared to 26 percent for De Castro.

Bunye, however, said "the major decisions of the President do not depend on surveys."

GMA will win

In Davao Oriental, one of Ms Macapagal's party mates, Rep. Joel Almario, is sure the President will run in the 2004 elections.

"As a Lakas stalwart, I know the President will definitely run in 2004. She will run. She will proclaim it in due time," said Almario, chair of the House committee on Mindanao affairs.

Almario is confident Ms Macapagal would easily win the elections "because the people knew she is sincere."

He pointed out that even the President's critics know that she was running because they had been hurling accusations against First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo.

Sen. Panfilo Lacson is claiming that Arroyo hoarded at least P200 million in unspent campaign contributions to Ms Macapagal when she ran for vice president in 1998.

Almario said the aim of the accusation was to "destroy" Ms Macapagal's bid to seek another term.

But Almario said that despite the accusations, Ms Macapagal could easily get reelected "because the people know all these exposés against the First Couple are just politically motivated." *With reports from AFP, Ferdinand O. Zuasola PDI Mindanao Bureau*

Can you buy happiness? Yes and no

From page A1

richer, according to the USC study titled, "Explaining Happiness," which will be available later this week on the website of the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (www.pnas.org).

The British Broadcasting Corp. (BBC), however, reported Sunday on its website that another study by University of Warwick researchers indicated the opposite: Winning £1,000 (P82 million) could enliven one's outlook on life.

The USC study, which challenged theories supported by many psychologists, found no internal "set point" of happiness to which people revert to despite job loss, divorce, serious injury or other events.

Nor did the same study confirm that a person's wellbeing grows with increased wealth.

"Many people are under the illusion that the more money we make, the happier we'll be," said Richard Easterlin, a USC economist who analyzed data in the General Social Study, a yearly survey of 1,500 people conducted since 1975.

"We put all of our resources into making money at the expense of our family and our health … The problem is we don't realize that our material wants increase with the amount of money we make," Easterlin added.

The USC study found that "happiness typically came from spending quality time with loved ones and from good health."

According to the study, people who appeared to be happy tended to be friendly and optimistic in nature, with plenty of self-control, a deep sense of ethics and high self-esteem.

Other study

According to the BBC report, experts have found that a strong marriage and good health were more likely than money to make people feel content.

But lots of money can make a positive impact on a person's sense of happiness, according to the University of Warwick study cited by the BBC.

"We found a strong link between financial windfalls and being happy and having much better psychological health," the BBC quoted Andrew Oswald, a professor leading the University of Warwick research, as saying.

"A small amount of money is not going to solve a major health problem or solve a major psychological problem. But it's true we can detect even quite small windfalls … begin to show up in our statistics on our psychological wellbeing," Oswald explained.

"Overall the more you get, we find, the cheerier you'll become. Large sums are better than small sums."

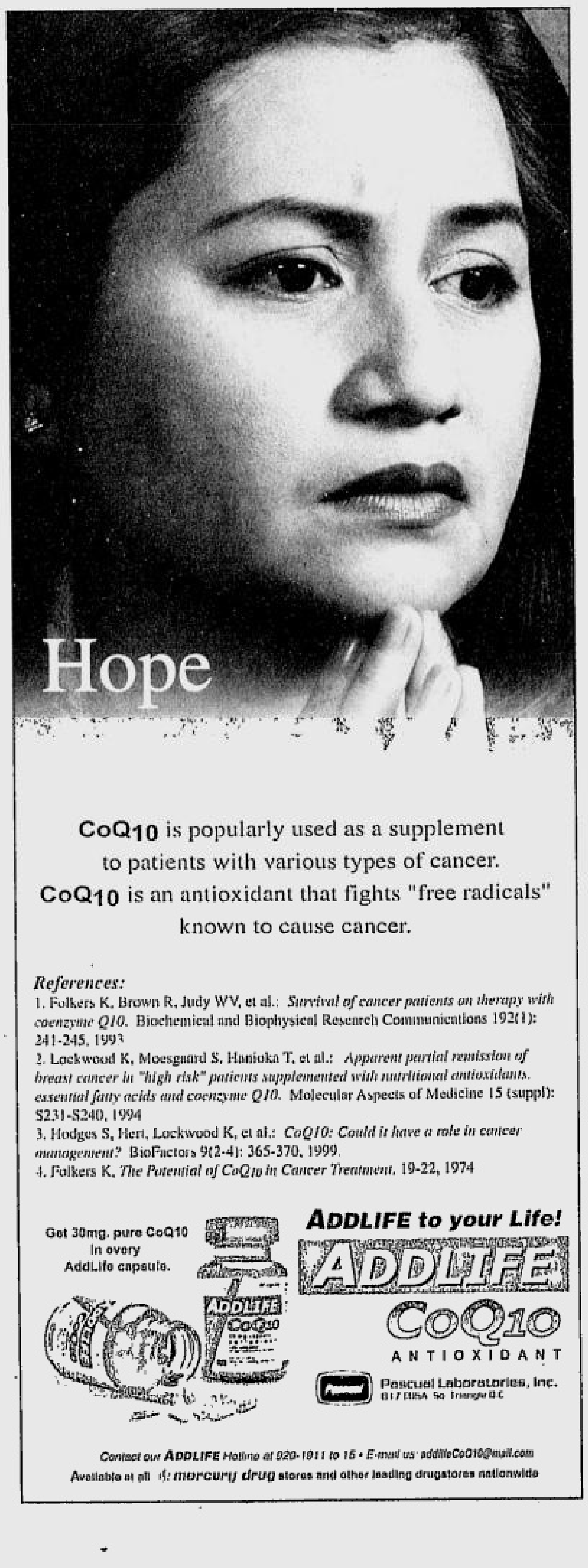
University of Warwick researchers looked into 9,000 families in Britain throughout the 1990s, examining the impact of financial windfalls on the psychological health and levels of happiness of people during the period.

Oswald acknowledged that one's good mental health and happiness were not determined by money alone.

"There are lots of other factors in life, especially personal things like getting married and so on," he was quoted as saying.

The University of Warwick research also found that women tended to be happier than men, and that older people tended to be more content that those in their 30s.

Oswald observed that the happiness curve was U-shaped: People begin life happy, becoming discontented in their early 30s, and recovering their happiness way into their 60s. *With report from AFP*


Hope

CoQ10 is popularly used as a supplement to patients with various types of cancer.
CoQ10 is an antioxidant that fights "free radicals" known to cause cancer.

References:
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1:00-1:30 pm.	Penta Technological Products, Inc.
1:35-3:50 pm.	IPM(Integrated Project Management) The Key to Better, Faster Cheaper Implementation of Machinery Project + QA by: Penta Technology, Inc.
3:55-5:00 pm.	Optimizing Tool & Die Life via Effective Heat Treatment by: Associated Swedish Steels Phils., Inc. (ASSAB)

August 29 - Friday	
11:00-11:30 am	CAD / CAM by: CADTECH
11:35-12:05 pm	CAD / CAM by: CADSPHERE
1:00-2:05 pm	Non-Contact and Contact Measuring System by OGP (s)
2:10-2:40 pm	Graphite Technology by: Filsonics Phils.
2:45-3:15 pm	Sheet Metal Fabrication by: Nicklaus Machinery
3:20-3:50 pm	Making the Lead from Autocad to Autodesk Inventor Series by: CIM Technologies
3:55-4:25 pm	CP & N - Profiltec
4:30-5:00 pm	Rapid Mold Design with Solidworks and Leading Partner by: SEACAD Technologies Pte. Ltd.

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Ping loses star witness

From page A1

President as saying. Defensor said he asked the President to protect Mahusay and his family.

Two helicopters

The two helicopters from Malacañang landed at the PNP Academy compound just as presidential spokesperson Ignacio Bunye arrived with a convoy of reporters.

In a dramatic twist, Mahusay tearfully asked forgiveness from the President in a brief statement when he was presented to the media at the PNP Academy in Silang at past 2 p.m.

"*Kay Ninang Gloria, humihingi ako ng paumanhin* (I am seeking an apology from Ninang Gloria)," said Mahusay, as he held on to his daughter Coleen.

His wife Julie Ann, brothers Ferdie and Jojo looked on. He said he desperately wanted to be reunited with his family, with whom he was separated for two months.

Bunye made light of his presence at the press conference by saying that he was only acting as an officer of Maro (Media Accreditation and Relations Office), the Malacañang office handling media coverage.

"I received a call from Secretary Defensor, I thought you (media) would be interested so I gave the information to you. I thought that was newsworthy," Bunye said.

At lunchtime, Bunye caused a commotion among Palace reporters when he said: "*Hawak na namin si Udong* (We're now holding Udong)."

Bunye said he was going to Cavite. When reporters asked him where and for what, he said they may follow him if they wanted to. He braved the monstrous traffic and the heavy rains to be at the PNPA.

Contradiction

Defensor's role in the "rescue" and Bunye's presence at the press conference contradicted Malacañang's line that the Palace would not interfere with the controversy that Arroyo was facing.

The President had said that Arroyo would have to face Lacson's charges by himself and that she "is married to the country."

Bunye issued a statement saying: "This is a private issue that is out of our turf. I ask the media to make a clear distinction between our official prerogatives in the Palace and the personal business of the First Gentleman."

But minutes after issuing the statement, Bunye rushed to the PNPA for the press conference. He did not sit at the table but joined Defensor and the Mahusays in a room before the media presentation.

Lacson, who presented Mahusay to the media on Monday, was quick to accuse Malacañang of masterminding the supposed abduction to keep him from testifying against Arroyo.

Lacson disclosed that another staff member of the First Gentleman had been abducted at the LTA Building on Perea Street in Makati.

"(He) was likewise abducted by the PSG (Presidential Security Group) and now being held in an undisclosed place. But whether or not Rommel Javier will acknowledge that he was abducted (is another story)."

Lacson maintained that Javier, Arroyo's secretary, was not his mole in the building, which he called the second most powerful office after Malacañang.

Lacson's allegation that Eugenio Mahusay was abducted was refuted by Jojo Mahusay, who phoned ANC Channel shortly before lunchtime to deny that his brother was abducted.

"He (Eugenio) asked me to fetch him because he feared that he might be abducted by armed men," Jojo said in Filipino.

At the press conference, Jojo disputed Lacson's allegations.

This was how the family recounted the incident.

Text messages

After receiving a call from Eugenio pleading that he fetch them, Jojo and company drove from Quezon City to Tagaytay. They received almost 50 text messages along the way.

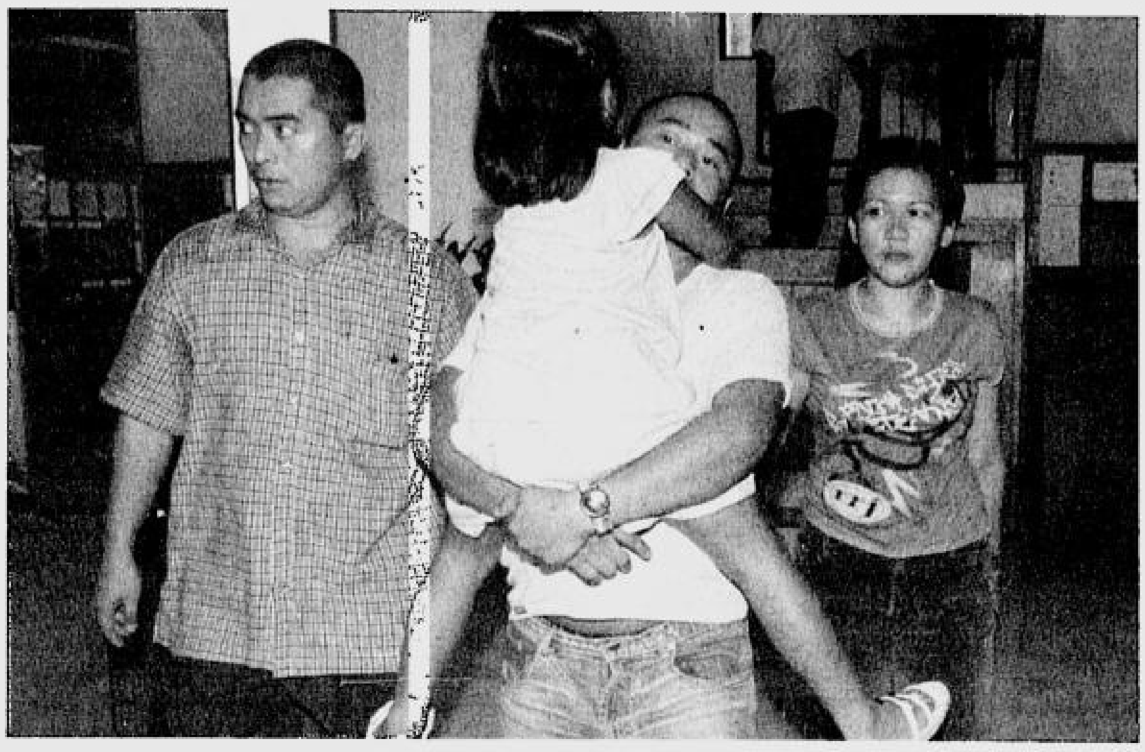
Defensor, who stood as one of the primary sponsors at Mahusay's wedding in 1997, was the designated driver.

Jojo said the rescue did not result in bloodshed because the armed men guarding his brother had thought that he was the one sent by Lacson to fetch the witness.

Upon reaching Milestone Hotel, Jojo said he proceeded to the second floor. "When I went up the stairs, the room boy immediately told me to go to Room 203. I was surprised, but I immediately proceeded to Room 203."

He knocked several times, but when he was about to force open the door, a man wearing a yellow shirt opened it up.

Jojo admitted he was holding his gun, but it was pointed downward. "When I saw my brother, I pushed away the man in yellow shirt, and pulled out my brother. I sensed that they were about to follow us," he said.



EUGENIO Mahusay carries his daughter Colleen after he was rescued by his brothers from a Tagaytay City hotel. Behind him are his wife Julie Ann and his brother Jojo, a policeman. EDWIN BACASMAS

After getting out of the room, Jojo then pushed his brother toward his wife and brother Ferdie who were waiting near the stairs.

When one of the guards followed them, Jojo, while holding his gun, shouted: "*Huwag kayong susunod, kapatid ko s'ya* (Don't follow us, he's my brother)."

Jojo recalled that even Eugenio's guards downstairs did not put up any resistance thinking that he and the family were the group sent to fetch Eugenio. "They were surprised . . . *Nalansi namin sila* (We tricked them)."

They then boarded the car being driven by Defensor and proceeded to the PNP Academy.

The daring rescue sparked speculations that Mahusay was about to recant the statements he had issued against the First Gentleman.

But he refused to comment during the press conference. Defensor said Mahusay would come out with a statement "at the proper time."

The statement, Defensor said, would be in the "best interest of his wife and family."

Supt. Eduardo Ballatan, Tagaytay City police chief, told the INQUIRER that no incident of the supposed abduction of Mahusay had been reported to the police station.

"So how can we act on the matter?" he said.

Not held against his will

Informed that Jojo had claimed that his brother was only "rescued," Lacson said: "No need to rescue (him) because he was not being held against his will. He voluntarily went to our office."

The senator pointed out that during the press conference the other day, it was evident from Mahusay's behavior that he was not being coached or held against his will.

He said that the brothers of his witness were not in a position "to debate what Mahusay is saying. Our witness is Mahusay."

Lacson maintained that it was Mahusay who approached him out of fear that the case would not prosper in the prosecutor's office or the courts.

"That's the reason why he appealed to us to (be allowed to expose what he knows). And he's now proven right, that after all ... nothing will happen if (he) goes through the process," the senator said.

He reiterated that Mahusay was forced to come out to protect his name after he was allegedly blamed by Arroyo for a cellular phone and undetermined sum of money that went missing.

"I do not know the method he used in gathering evidence. The crux of the matter is (that) we analyzed the documents. And on top of that, we conducted our own investigation to countercheck what he was telling us and we came to a conclusion that he was telling the truth."

"So it now depends on how Mahusay will make his own statement," said Lacson, who believes that Palace officials would "talk him out of testifying" against Arroyo.

Despite what he called the "abduction" of his star witness, Lacson maintained that his charges would stand the scrutiny of the court.

"We are holding onto a lot of evidence. Mahusay is just one of the evidence we will use. He's of course the main witness, but the documents that we are holding can stand alone," said Lacson.

He added: "Even without Mahusay, *mahusay pa rin* (it's still good)."

Defensor's account

Defensor maintained that Mahusay was "rescued" from the Milestone Hotel by his own family.

"It was the initiative of the family," Defensor said in a phone-patch interview over ANC News. "Against all odds we were able to leave the area," he said.

Defensor disclosed that Mahusay lost contact with his family on Monday, but found a way to contact his brother Jojo yesterday morning.

His wife then contacted Defensor, who was also the couple's wedding godfather. "He called, actually, the wife, and then she handed me the phone. Eugenio said, '*Ninong sunduin mo na ako* (fetch me).'"

They earlier thought of contacting the local police, but junked the idea to avoid a bloody confrontation with Mahusay's guards.

Eugenio asked Defensor to hurry up because two cars were about to fetch him for transfer to another safe house. "*Dapat maunahan nyo* (You should get here ahead of them)," said Defensor, quoting Mahusay.

"I was the one driving (my car)," the HUDCC chair said.

When they reached the hotel, they saw several armed men guarding Eugenio.

"There were plenty of them. The initial report we got was (that) there were only two guards. But when we got there, there were about five people, four downstairs and a lookout from a block away," Defensor said.

He said Jojo, "being a policeman, had a gun with him," went up followed by Mahusay's wife.

Defensor and the daughter stayed downstairs.

"As predicted, if we were confronted by hostile forces, they would understand that it was the family fetching Eugenio Mahusay, and we're not . . . about to shoot it out with them," he said.

Luckily, he said there was no strong resistance from the guards. "We were able to pull him out."

Defensor said that the men guarding Mahusay were armed, "but I guess when they saw me backing up they also got scared of pulling out the guns. The wife and everyone else got to the car and we drove off."

"I immediately called up the President and told her, "Ma'am *baka delikado kami* (we may be in danger)," and immediately we proceeded to the (PNP) camp," he said.

The President advised the group to take extra precaution, according to Defensor. *With a report from Delfin T. Mallari Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Mahusays happy but . . .

From page A1

because we have to piece together what has happened," he said in a phone interview with the INQUIRER. "We are happy we are all together again. I'm just a little worried because I'm sure this is not the end."

If he had his way, Ferdinand said, he would rather live a quiet life. But his family has found itself embroiled in battle of wills between the camps of Sen. Panfilo Lacson and President Macapagal-Arroyo.

The ties that bind the Mahusays, who hail from Negros Occidental and Leyte, with the First Family date back to 1991.

According to PO2 Jojo Mahusay, they crossed paths with the Arroyos when he and his brothers were still living in Caingin, Quezon City.

"We used to live in a squatter area just behind La Vista Subdivision, where the family of Madame President lives," Jojo said in a phone interview.

Since only a wall separated the Mahusays' humble dwelling from the posh home of the Arroyos, the children of the two families came to know one another.

"Their gardener would shout to us to come over to the other side to play basketball, etc.," Jojo said.

Soon thereafter, he said, he and Eugenio and their eldest brother Ferdinand were introduced to the Arroyo sons Mikey and Dato.

Later, Ferdinand was asked by Jose Miguel Arroyo to become a member of the staff of his wife, then still a senator, Jojo said.

It was Ferdinand who got Eugenio to work for the Arroyos. Eugenio became a staff member of Ms Macapagal's Senate office in 1996, right after he completed his term as chair of the Sangguniang Kabataan in Barangay Pansol, Quezon City.

Jojo said it was when Ms Macapagal became President that Eugenio transferred to the LTA Building on Perea Street, Makati, as a personal messenger of the First Gentleman.

Humble beginnings

Both Ferdinand and Jojo spoke of knowing poverty at an early age. They said their parents' earnings as driver and washerwoman were not enough to put food on the table.

Ferdinand, 37 and the eldest of a brood of seven (the other siblings are Francisco, Evangeline, Alex and Corazon), described Eugenio as a hardworking boy who sold *pan de sal* in the morning to earn money on his own.

"We were very poor and we needed to find sources of income to help out," he said.

The parents eventually decided to farm out the children to relatives with better means.

Thus, Eugenio grew up with relatives in Leyte, and Ferdinand was sent to other relatives in Quezon City.

Because of their unique situation, Ferdinand served as surrogate father to his siblings. "Eugenio and the others always followed what I would tell them to do. There were no fights, *tampuhan lang* (only minor misunderstandings)," he said.

The young Jojo also sold *pan de sal* and worked as a grass cutter or gardener to survive.

He said he was able to go to college through sheer hard work, and became a policeman in 1996.

He had stints with the Department of Interior and Local Government, Camp Crame, React team and Northern Police District, and is now assigned to the Central Police District.

Computer course

After finishing a two-year computer course at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Eugenio, now 31, married his girlfriend Julie Ann, a Bicolana. They have a 5-year-old daughter.

Jojo refused to comment on the truth or falsity of the sworn statement issued by Eugenio on the supposed "Jose Pidal" account of the President's husband.

"My brother has his own principles, but I think you must know that he had been missing for the last two months," Jojo said, adding:

"Senator Lacson claimed that he was not being held [against his will]. But how can the senator explain the fact that my brother had not gone home to his family for two months?"

Jojo expressed the conviction that his brother could not gather evidence to pin down the First Gentleman on his own.

"*Wala siyang kakayahang gawin iyan* (He has no capability to do that)," Jojo said.

Solon says Union Bank can identify 'Jose Pidal'

From page A1

gation that Arroyo was engaged in money laundering before the Court of Appeals and the Anti-Money Laundering Council could freeze the Pidal account and look into it. "Unless of course he [Lacson] just wants to play politics. That's his prerogative," the congressman said.

Deputy Speaker Raul Gonzalez (NP, Iloilo City) suggested that the Senate look into Sen. Aquilino Pimentel's possible connection with Lacson's supposed drive to pin down Ms Macapagal's husband.

Gonzalez noted that Lacson's supposed star witness, Eugenio Mahusay Jr., was once in the employ of a certain Alex Carlos, a purported associate of both Pimentel and Estrada, as earlier alleged by Mahusay's elder brother Ferdinand.

"Now it is starting to unravel because Senator Pimentel earlier claimed that the Lacson exposé was first offered to him 10 months ago but that he refused to bite," Gonzalez said, adding:

"Did Senator Pimentel really reject the offer to smear Mike Arroyo or was he just smart enough and gave the story to Ping Lacson to do the dirty job? It appears that he wants to play the role of clean guy while Lacson will do the dirty tricks for the opposition."

According to Gonzalez, Pimentel has an ax to grind against Ms Macapagal on two counts: her failure to appoint him Vice President despite his having held the microphone when she took her oath as President in January 2001, and his losing the Senate presidency to Franklin Drilon, with her blessings.

"Is Senator Pimentel the real instigator against the First Gentleman, because until now he has not outlived his frustration?" Gonzalez said.

Downfall

From his detention suite at the Veterans Memorial Medical Center in Quezon City, Estrada said the Jose Pidal issue "might be the start of the downfall of this illegitimate government."

He said the issue—from which, he predicted, the Macapagal administration would "not be able to recover"—was also contributing to the decline of the peso against the dollar and the continuing restiveness of the military.

He also said public perception was strong that Arroyo could actually be the owner of the Pidal account.

In Estrada's reckoning, the supposed effort of the government to pressure Eugenio Mahusay against revealing what he knew about the Pidal account was making matters worse.

He said that during his impeachment trial, "I allowed [Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis] Chavit Singson and [former bank executive] Clarissa Ocampo to speak freely about the alleged Jose Velarde account."

"But when it was my turn to speak up, the prosecutors walked out. Now they are also using Mahusay's family to prevent him from talking. What do we have now, martial law?" he said, adding that the government should let Lacson's witness talk and "let justice take its course."

He also said many of his followers were now saying that they could take poverty but not injustice.

"They are asking me what they should do. I tell them to relax because this government is starting to self-destruct."

GMA's plans

Congressman Moreno said the Pidal controversy would have serious repercussions on Ms Macapagal's political plans for 2004, especially her supposed intention to stand for election. *(See story on Page A1.)*

"Politics is a matter of perception," he said. "The allegations against the First Gentleman have reverberated all throughout the country, and these have affected the President, she being the wife of the one accused of alleged improprieties."

Moreno, a known supporter of Raul Roco, a declared presidential hopeful for 2004, noted that even before the Anti-Money Laundering Act was passed into law in 2002, the use of fictitious names for accounts was, although allowed for some, not considered prudent banking practice.

He said that with the passage of the Amla, which prohibits fictitious accounts, the proper thing that could have been done was to phase out such existing ones.

No Clarissa

Congressmen Gonzalez and Prospero Pichay (Lakas, Surigao del Sur) both feel that whatever Eugenio Mahusay says against Ms Macapagal's husband will not be credible.

They said Mahusay could not be compared to Clarissa Ocampo, star witness at Estrada's impeachment trial, who testified that she saw the then President sign banking documents in the name of Jose Velarde.

"There is a world of difference between the credibility of Clarissa Ocampo and of Mahusay," Gonzalez said.

Pichay said that unlike Mahusay, a utility employee, Ocampo, now former vice president of Equitable PCIBank, had the "authority to speak of banking issues." *With a report from Armand Nocum*

NBI clears Mike A: He's not 'Jose Pidal'

From page A1

bureau expert for 36 years, said he noted six differences in the structural pattern of letter forms and the direction of strokes in the two signatures.

"[They] were not written by one and the same person," he said of the photocopy of the Pidal signature presented earlier by Sen. Panfilo Lacson and seven specimen signatures of President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband.

But he was quick to add that his finding was just his "qualified opinion," and that a definite analysis would be made only when the original Pidal signature was examined.

Of the six differences Constantino noted, four were found in the writing of the letter "J": offset to the right in Pidal's signature and more upright in Arroyo's signature; initial or starting stroke pointed downward in Pidal's and starting from the right and going upward in Arroyo's; bigger loop in Pidal's; and enclosure on the right sidewall in Pidal's.

He said the letter "O" was wide open in Pidal's and closed or only slightly opened in Arroyo's.

Finally, he said, the dots in the letter "I" were too different—closer to the "I" and more rounded in Pidal's signatures and farther from the "I" and more elongated in Arroyo's.

Mike A, Vicky T are lovers, says Mahusay

From page A1

owned by the First Gentleman," he said in the affidavit he executed on July 21, 2003.

He said a certain "Nestor" and Weng Salud, helicopter maintenance crew members, could attest to this.

Other errands he supposedly did for Arroyo included giving the latter a massage every time a certain Ernesto Beltran, known as "Tiyana," was not around to do so.

Mahusay said these tasks were in addition to depositing and withdrawing money for the First Gentleman in the latter's alleged secret bank accounts.

Other revelations Mahusay made in the three-page affidavit include:

- His claim that the money he has withdrawn and deposited in Arroyo's alleged secret bank accounts would amount to a whopping P1 billion.
- That several people, like Philippine Gaming and Amusement Corp. (Pagcor) Chair Efraim Genuino and former Transportation Secretary Pantaleon Alvarez, would bring to Arroyo's office money amounting to millions and he would deposit them to his employer's alleged secret bank account.

"If one would sum up the amount of money that went through my hands being the messenger and the one tasked with going to the bank, this would amount to P1 billion or even more until I left my job in March 2002," Mahusay said.

Banayo said Mahusay executed the affidavit almost a month before Lacson raised the allegations against Arroyo in a privileged speech on Aug.18.

The former messenger of Arroyo said he was the one who would deposit and withdraw money amounting to millions of pesos to seven bank accounts that the First Gentleman opened in three banks located near the latter's office at 18 Perea St. in Legazpi Village, Makati.

The accounts were under the Lualhati Foundation Inc., Victoria Toh, Thomas Toh, and Kelvin Tan, while two of the bank accounts were under the name of Jose Pidal, whom Mahusay claimed to be Arroyo.

Among the checks he would deposit in the Jose Pidal and the Lualhati Foundation were from the friends and business associates of Arroyo and Ms Macapagal like Honeyboy Palanca, Bob Go Tong, Amable Aguiluz, Dante Soriquez, George Ty, Ramon Jacinto.

Mahusay said he would also deposit money from other people who come to Arroyo's office such as Benjamin Chua of La Tondeña, Pagcor chair Efraim Genuino, rice trader Kishore Hemlani, Ching Vargas of the office of the President, Alvarez and Jeff Cheng of Piatco.

"And the largest sums of money to be brought to Arroyo's office come from Genuino of Pagcor," Mahusay said. "Genuino's aide, Ryan Cordero, would bring in the money in a large bag almost twice a week."

To prove his claim that he was tasked with withdrawing the money for Arroyo, Mahusay said his signature would appear at the end of the used checks.

One of the checks that he had deposited in the Jose Pidal and Lualhati Foundation accounts belonged to former Manila Rep. Mark Jimenez.

Mahusay said it was Victoria Toh who would instruct him about the deposits and withdrawals to be done. She was also the one who issued the checks for Thomas Toh, Kelvin Tan, Jose Pidal and Lualhati Foundation.

He said a certain G. Nestor "Atoy" Pineda, an official of the Union Bank-Perea branch, could prove his allegations because he personally knew Pineda.

Mahusay said he called Pineda every time he would withdraw money so that the cash would be prepared before hand.

Mahusay also claimed that in the second week of July 2001, Arroyo asked him to withdraw money from his Jose Pidal account and had them changed into US dollars, amounting to $10,000.

He said he saw Arroyo put the money in a brown envelope and handed it to the former military intelligence chief, Brig. Gen. Victor Corpus.

Mahusay said he had heard that the money would be used in gathering information against Lacson.

Mahusay was not abducted, says Milestone Hotel clerk

By Margaux Ortiz
Metro

AN EMPLOYEE of the hotel in Tagaytay City where Sen. Panfilo Lacson's star witness allegedly stayed said no armed men forcibly abducted Eugenio Mahusay Jr. yesterday.

Gil Ong, stay-in front desk officer of the Milestone Hotel-Apartelle, two men and a woman calmly entered the hotel at around 11:00 a.m.

Ong said the men asked for the room number of one of the guests and then went upstairs.

"One of them was talking to our guest through his cell phone when they entered the hotel," Ong said.

Ong said the guest, who checked in at around midnight yesterday, came down with the men and rode in a white Ford Expedition.

"*Sinundo lang talaga, wala namang nangyari* (Nothing happened, the men just fetched our guest)," Ong told reporters.

He said he was not aware that the guest was Eugenio Mahusay Jr. and that the men who fetched him was Cabinet Secretary Mike Defensor and Eugenio's brother PO2 Jojo Mahusay. The woman was Eugenio's wife.

"*Napanood lang namin sa TV ngayon* (We just saw them on television)," Ong said.

Ong added Mahusay wore a white T-shirt and a baseball cap, which concealed his face, when he checked in.

Mahusay initially wrote a different name on the hotel's guest book but changed his mind and erased it, Ong said.

The desk officer said Mahusay stayed in Room 203.

He paid P1,750 for a deluxe room, Ong said. The hotel has only 10 rooms.

After a few minutes, two men entered the hotel and registered in the guest book, Ong said.

"They also chose a room on the second floor," the desk officer said. But Ong said he was not sure if Mahusay and the men knew each other.

"It's against our hotel's policy to snoop around," Ong said. "All I know is the men were not armed."

He also said the men left shortly after Mahusay's departure. The hotel was on Magnolia Street, Crossing Mendez East, Tagaytay.

Ong said that room boy Dominador Lazarte, who witnessed their guest's departure, left at around 1:00 p.m. yesterday and did not come back.

"He said he just went out for lunch," Ong said.

He added, "I guess he feared for his life when he learned that very important people were involved in the incident."

Araceli Ordoño, caretaker of the house in front of the hotel, said the white vehicle stayed in the area for only a few minutes.

Ordoño said the vehicle then sped off toward the highway.

"I did not see any armed men nor hear any form of commotion," Ordoño said.

She told reporters that the house she was "caring for" ironically belonged to Sen. Gringo Honasan in the mid-1980s.

Pastor Saycon gives 'Pidal' papers to Cardinal Vidal

By Bernadette A. Parco
PDI Visayas Bureau

CEBU CITY—Cebu Archbishop Ricardo Cardinal Vidal is now in possession of documents pertaining to the controversial "Jose Pidal" account, courtesy of the secretary general of the Council of Philippine Affairs (Copa).

Vidal yesterday told reporters that the Copa's Pastor "Boy" Saycon gave him the documents Saturday night at his office in the Archbishop's Palace and that he was "humbled" by the gesture.

"It was a very short meeting and he just handed me some papers," the cardinal said. "I have not even perused them yet because I have so much work to do. I did not even recognize him. He did not tell me who he was. Perhaps he was trusting that I would not recognize him."

Vidal said he did not intend to read the documents because these were not related to religious matters. He said Saycon had indicated that the documents pertained to the Pidal case.

"But at least he entrusted [the papers] to me for safekeeping. I do not know exactly why he gave them to me," Vidal said.

The Copa has charged First Gentleman Jose Miguel Arroyo with plunder in the Office of the Ombudsman. It said Arroyo pocketed P500 million in government funds from the construction of the Diosdado Macapagal Boulevard.

A portion of the money was allegedly deposited in the Pidal account.

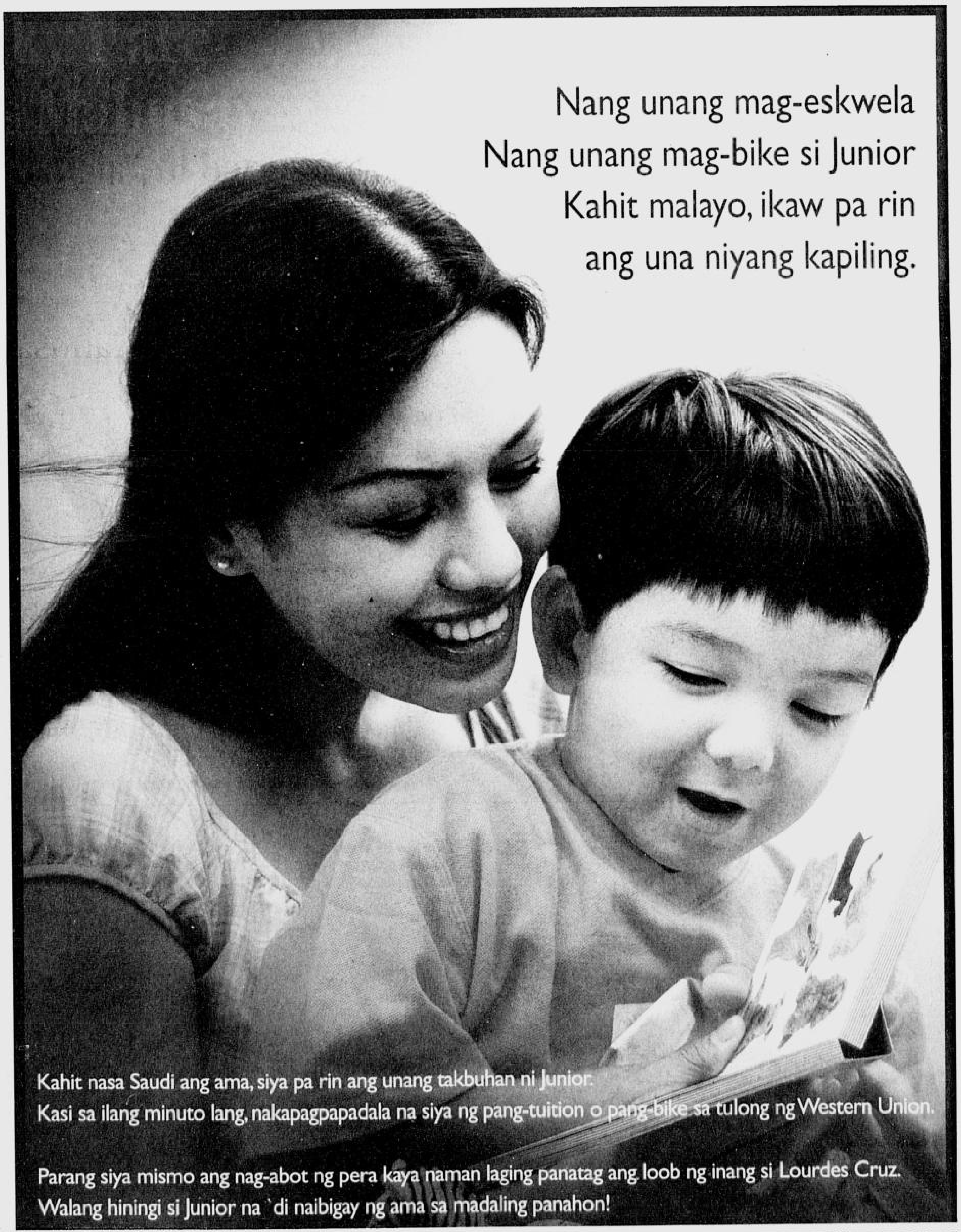
Saycon earlier said he would share with Cardinal Vidal information about the supposedly overpriced boulevard and the Pidal account exposed by Sen. Panfilo Lacson.

He said the Copa wanted to share the information to enlighten the Church about the country's present condition.

Vidal said that while he appreciated Saycon's show of trust, he did not know "how to handle all these things."

"I do not know if [the documents] are the original copies," the cardinal said. "He handed to me some papers. As you know, I am always going around so I do not have time to check them. I cannot say anything about [the matter]."

Vidal also said Saycon did not indicate when he would get the documents back.



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Dragnet

By Juliet Labog-Javellana, Alcuin Papa and Edson Tandoc Jr.

MONDAY'S daring heist at the Citibank Center in the country's financial district has touched a raw nerve, prompting President Macapagal-Arroyo to order the police and other security agencies to renew the crackdown on robbery syndicates.

"The law enforcement agencies have teamed up to intercept the perpetrators and to deter such brazen crimes," Ms Macapagal said in announcing a dragnet yesterday.

In a statement, she added that more police visibility and intelligence networking are needed to contain crimes such as the one committed right in the Makati Business District on Monday.

Shortly after the President issued her orders, Southern Police District Director Chief Supt. Jose Gutierrez announced that they have identified three of the robbery suspects who stormed the Citibank Center on Paseo de Roxas, Salcedo Village, Makati.

Based on footage from security cameras, and description provided by bank employees and witnesses, the police have identified one of the suspects as Randell Llanos.

He and the other suspects have been charged with the robbery of an Equitable-PCIBank branch in Makati last April, Gutierrez said.

The robbery investigation on Monday hit a snag when bank officials allegedly refused to cooperate with the police.

But according to Senior Supt. Jovito Gutierrez, Makati police chief, the Citibank officials were only being cautious.

"(The bank officials) did not allow police to enter the premises (on Monday) because some of their female employees were still terrified," Gutierrez said.

Now, the police chief added, the bank officials are "cooperating fully" with investigators.

The reported non-cooperation of Citibank officials has also prompted Makati Mayor Jejomar Binay to come up with procedures in dealing with robberies.

"I would like to emphasize the importance of (the bank officials') cooperation with the authorities," Binay said in a statement. "It is frustrating to see policemen being made to wait for two hours outside the bank, supposedly on orders of the bank management."

Gutierrez also appealed to officials of other banks to "seriously upgrade" their security systems to deter similar robberies.

Around 15 suspects armed entered the Citibank at around 3:45 p.m. Monday and made off with a still undetermined amount of cash.

LAWMEN stand guard outside the Citibank Center in the heart of the Makati financial district after 15 armed men on Monday hit the bank in a three-minute heist.

AFP

Frat man sentenced to die for TIP bombing

By Tina Santos

A QUEZON City judge yesterday handed down the death penalty to Reyhniland Barro, 24, for throwing a grenade at the Technological Institute of the Philippnes campus, killing one student and injuring at least 43 others in February 2000.

Judge Maria Theresa Yadao of Regional Trial Court Branch 81 yesterday ruled that Barro, of Barangay Napico, Pasig City, was guilty of murder and frustrated murder.

In her 12-page decision, Yadao also ordered Barro to pay P50,000 to the family of Dhian Ray Navarro, the mechanical engineering student killed in the explosion.

Barro's younger brother Roosevelt, was initially charged with the crime alongside his brother. But he was later acquitted when the judge found no sufficient evidence against Roosevelt.

Court records showed that the Barro brothers—sons of Lt. Col. Reynaldo Barro, of the Regional Community Defense Group in Camp Eldridge in Los Baños, Laguna—were students and members of the Samahang Batangas Varsitarian (SBF) fraternity at the time of the bombing.

According to court records, the SBF has a running feud with the Samahang Ilocano group.

Court witnesses positively identified Barro as the man who lobbed the fragmentation grenade near the TIP front gate on Aurora Boulevard, Quezon City on February 3, 2000.

Police eye closer ties with bank security

By Luige del Puerto

EASTERN Police District (EPD) officials have begun beefing up security in commercial centers and banks in their area, following the robbery of the Citibank Center in Makati City on Monday.

In Marikina City, the police are set to meet with the banks' security officials to flesh out a comprehensive alarm and response system in the event of a robbery.

Senior Supt. Felipe Rojas Jr. said the police would also brief the officials about "Operation Dragnet," a response system where mobile units are immediately set up in crucial entry and exit points—called choke points—in the city whenever an alarm is raised.

Under the system, each police community precinct would be designated a choke point.

The police have been conducting training exercises this month to familiarize the lawmen about the choke points, Rojas said.

In Mandaluyong City, police chief Supt. Ericson Velasquez said mobile units have been ordered to regularly check banks and other commercial establishments.

Mandaluyong, San Juan and Pasig are home to four of the biggest malls in Metro Manila.

Velasquez said he has also directed plainclothesmen to ride jeepneys and FX taxis in areas considered as "crime prone."

P160 M in illegal rice seized in Valenzuela warehouses

AUTHORITIES yesterday discovered about P160 million worth of what they called illegal rice in two warehouses in Valenzuela City.

Members of the City Mayor's Action Team and the National Bureau of Investigation yesterday at noon searched the two warehouses on De Zafra Street, Maysan, Valenzuela City and found over 230,000 sacks of rice.

The City Mayor's Action Team came across the warehouses when they went there to check the owner's business permits on Aug. 11.

Team leader Gabby Alipio told the INQUIRER that they found the second warehouse to be lacking the necessary mayor's permit.

The authorities then secured a search warrant from Valenzuela City Regional Trial Court Branch 12 Judge Floro Alejo and proceeded to the warehouse.

But the tenant of the warehouses, Pacholo Matias, yesterday told the INQUIRER that the sacks of rice in his custody were acquired legally.

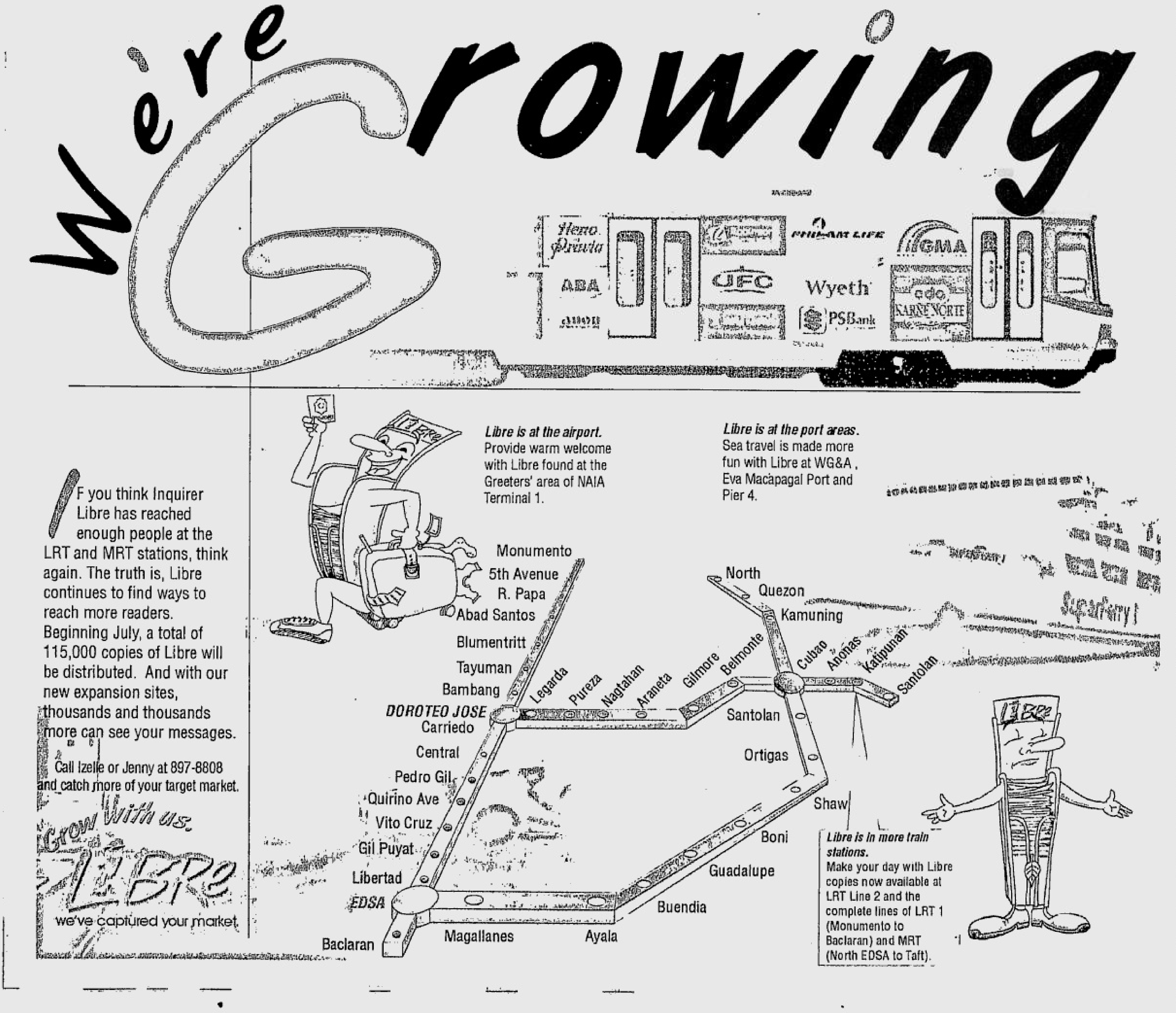
Matias said he legally imported the rice from Thailand.

Matias said he would submit to the NBI today the necessary documents to prove the legality of the rice found in his warehouses.

If he fails to submit the proper documents, Matias would be charged with Technical Smuggling, NBI raiding team head Rod Mapoy said.

Mapoy explained that using the same document for different transactions falls under Technical Smuggling. Matias was allegedly using a permit for 100,000 sacks of rice when he had 230,000 sacks in his warehouses.

The NBI agents have temporarily padlocked the warehouses. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*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METROBRIEFS

Malonzo on urinals

CALOOCAN City Mayor Reynaldo Malonzo likes the idea of public urinals but does not like the way these are packaged by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority. Malonzo said the MMDA's intention in erecting the urinals was good. However, the facility needed some "redesigning." The mayor said passersby could see who was inside the urinal and what he was doing which made it an eyesore. Aside from this, Malonzo said the urinals emitted foul odor. He said Caloocan would stop any plans to erect urinals in the city until the facility was redesigned. *Edson Tandoc Jr.*

One lesson for prof

PROFESSOR Lucien Peralta of the Technological University of the Philippines was taken to the Mandaluyong City police station after he hit the car of PO3 Romarico Sta. Maria. According to Sta. Maria, Peralta smelled of liquor when the professor hit his car which was parked in front of a restaurant in Barangay Hulo. The policeman said he would have just let the professor go had the latter not called him names. Nonetheless, Sta. Maria decided not to press charges against Peralta.

Luige del Puerto

Inside job at mall

NO LOCKS were broken and there were no signs of forcible entry. Also, the key to the store's vault was missing. This led the police to believe that an "insider" took the P110,000 of the Hang Ten store at the ground floor of Building A of the Megamall. The police said whoever took the money—the shop's sales for four days—knew that the key to the vault was left beside the store's computer. The police said a staff, Michelle Ann Villaluna, discovered the theft when she showed up for work at 9:45 a.m. yesterday. She told investigators that she saw light coming from the men's section. She also noticed that the store's gate was slightly ajar. Alarmed, she called store manager Rona Ablaza and senior staff Fredalyn Sastre. They checked the shop together, the police said. *Luige del Puerto*

An appeal for help

MRS. DIGNA Yanos is appealing for financial aid to help defray costs of her husband's maintenance medicines. Robert Yanos had undergone a kidney transplant and needs to take the medicines daily to help him recover faster. Donors may call Mrs. Yanos at 0919-4410761 or deposit their donations in Landbank Account no. 3216-0230-55.

Malabon cops undergo surprise drug test

By Edson Tandoc Jr.

POLICEMEN at the Malabon City police station were surprised the other day when, after their flag ceremony, they were asked to submit their urine.

And submit urine sample they did, as a surprise drug test was conducted on the city cops last Monday at the city police headquarters.

The Malabon City Anti-Drug Abuse Council administered the drug tests about 9 a.m. Monday.

Malabon City Police chief Pete Ramos said the surprise drug test was conducted in line with President Macapagal-Arroyo's anti-drug campaign.

The last drug test administered on Malabon City policemen was in July last year.

More than 270 lawmen underwent drug testing.

Impatience mounts over viaduct repair

By Alcuin Papa

THE MUNTINLUPA City government is getting impatient over the rehabilitation of the Alabang viaduct, an elevated road that allows motorists to pass over the crowded town center.

The Philippine National Construction Corporation (PNCC) promised to start repairs on the flyover this August but there were no signs that any rehabilitation work would be taking place this month, the officials lamented in a statement to media.

Councilor Ike de la Rea pointed out that Mayor Jaime Fresnedi had been urging the PNCC to repair the viaduct.

Fresnedi has been receiving complaints from motorists regarding the deteriorating and shaky condition of the structure.

De la Rea said they would again be calling the attention of the construction company to the needed repairs in an upcoming public hearing.

During the hearing, the local government would seek a definite response from the PNCC on when rehabilitation would actually start.

Currently, the condition of the viaduct prevents cargo trucks weighing 20 tons or more from using it.

Trucks are forced to take the road beneath, causing heavy traffic within the vicinity of the Alabang public market and the various malls in the area.

Muntinlupa City Engineer Vic Navarro said the rehabilitation would take 18 months. This would include retrofitting and reinforcement of the viaduct's columns.

He added that the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) was due to coordinate with the local government on the management of traffic in the city.

Delays in the rehabilitation of the elevated road have occurred despite the allocation of a P700 million fund by the Department of Public Works and Highways.

Repair work was supposed to commence on Aug. 1, 2002, with the construction of two ground-level feeder lanes for trucks.

However, plans did not push through.

According to reports, the condition of the viaduct have been raising much concern after pieces of concrete fall from the viaduct every once in a while.

Also, motorists have reported feeling the flyover shake.

PAO lawyers turn back on woman

By Luige del Puerto

THE PUBLIC Attorney's Office (PAO) of Mandaluyong City refused to help a woman who sought their assistance in retrieving her daughter who was allegedly being held incommunicado by her employer, according to the police.

P02 Nerissa Duason of the women's desk said PAO lawyers shooed them away twice yesterday.

Duason said her office sought the PAO's help in filing a writ of habeas corpus against the employer of Nelda Tejano, a 19-year-old housemaid, who had not communicated with her mother Rosita for more than a year.

A writ of habeas compels a person who has custody of another to produce the latter before a court.

However, PAO lawyer Ruperto del Rosario denied that his office refused to help Rosita.

He said he only advised her to coordinate first with the agency which brought her daughter to Manila from Surigao.

"It should be the agency that should file a case against the employer because it was the agency who made the contract with the employer, not the mother," Del Rosario said.

Mandaluyong police chief Sr. Supt. Ericson Velasquez, a lawyer himself, scoffed at Del Rosario's excuse.

INC sues rival

By Tina Santos

AS THE Iglesia ni Cristo group filed libel charges against the Philippine Daily Inquirer on Monday, two of its ministers also lodged separate libel complaints against the leader and 14 members of a rival religious group.

In their complaint filed before Quezon City Assistant Prosecutor Wilfredo Maynico, INC ministers Leopoldo Guevarra and Michael Sandoval said Eliseo "Eli" Soriano and several of his followers accused them of being the authors of a lewd magazine critical to him.

Guevarra and Sandoval host an INC television program, "Ang Tamang Daan," that purports to expose alleged irregularities in the teachings of self-styled preacher Soriano.

Soriano leads a rival religious program titled "Ang Dating Daan," which in turn claims to expose alleged errors and irregularities in the teachings and practices of the INC.

Guevarra and Sandoval said Soriano, without cause, issued defamatory imputation that tended to dishonor and discredit them.

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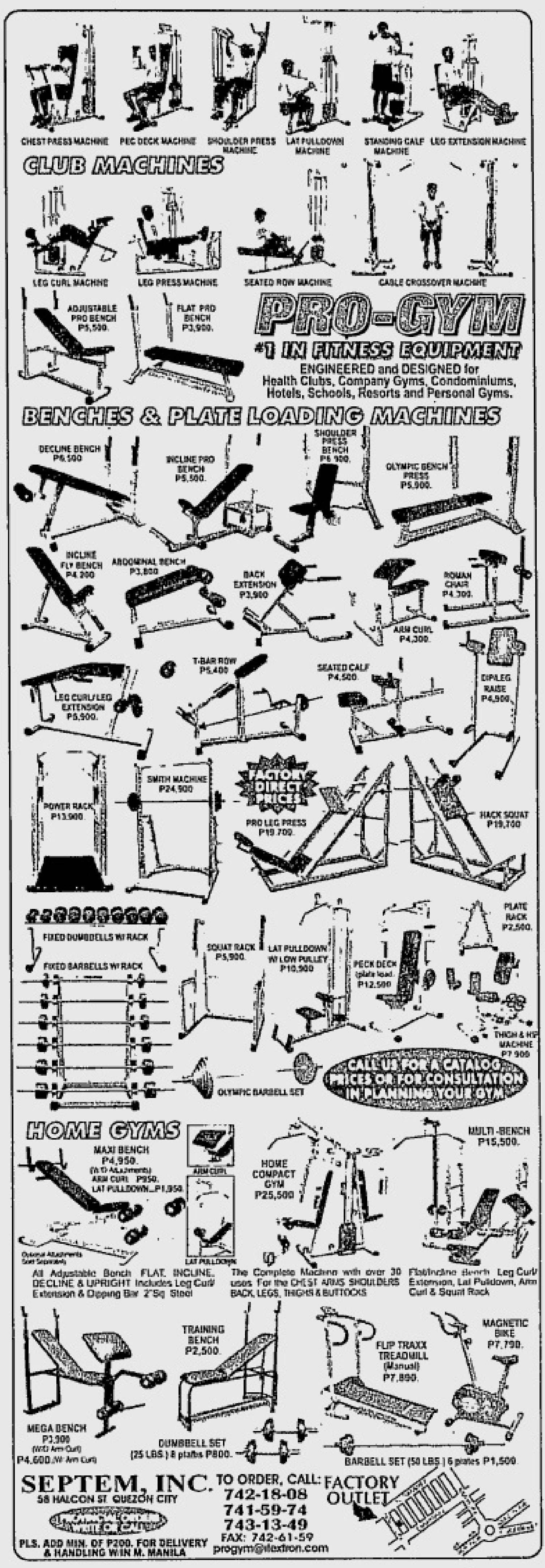

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SUERTRES (In exact order)
5 7 8

6/42 Luzon
17 19 22 28 35 40

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6 14 21 26 32 40

POLICE have set crackdown on robbery gangs. RUDY ESPERAS

Bank rob touches GMA nerve

See story on page A20

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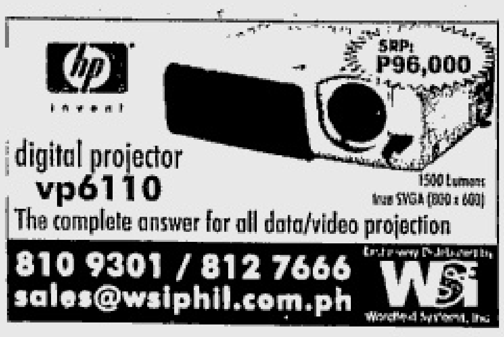
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LIFESTYLE CHECK

Puentevella timing off—Buhain

By Marc Anthony Reyes

THE INTENTION may be noble, but the timing is off.

This was the reaction of Philippine Sports Commission chair Eric Buhain yesterday to a call by Rep. Monico Puentevella for a lifestyle check on top PSC officials, whose brand new vehicles have become a source of wonder at the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

He said Puentevella's move came at a time when private sector has shown renewed interest in supporting Philippines sports, referring to the recent pledging session organized by First Gentleman Mike Arroyo in Malacañang that raised P24 million for the training of the SEAG-bound athletes.

Buhain added that the call to probe his officials for hidden wealth was a bit late because he and seven of his immediate staffers have already submitted their statements of assets and liabilities last June.

BUHAIN

But he refused to comment on the expensive cars whose presence in the exclusive parking space for PSC officials in front of the administration building at the Rizal complex was the subject of a column by INQUIRER's Recah Trinidad last Monday.

An official of a national sports association housed at the same PSC building said yesterday he now expects the new vehicles to be parked somewhere inside the sports complex, far from the inquisitive eyes of athletes and other sportsmen.

"We are fully supportive of President Arroyo's program to check on the lifestyle of government people," said Buhain, adding he wants a top-to-bottom check on the PSC hierarchy "so that some people won't be singled out."

While Buhain, a bemedalled swimmer who studied in the US and husband of a congresswoman from Batangas, and some commissioners are expected to easily pass the lifestyle check, the same can't be said of their respective staff.

Puentevella, a PSC commissioner from 1996-2002 and now chair of the House committee on youth and sports, said the PSC chair receives about P25,000 while the commissioners and consultants get P20,000 a month. The commissioners also enjoy a representation allowance of P100,000.

Buhain explained that the P24 million raised by corporate sponsors during the pledging session will be given directly to the 85 athletes selected for their gold-winning potentials, who will in turn liquidate their expenses to the respective donors.

"That would take a big burden from the PSC," said Buhain.

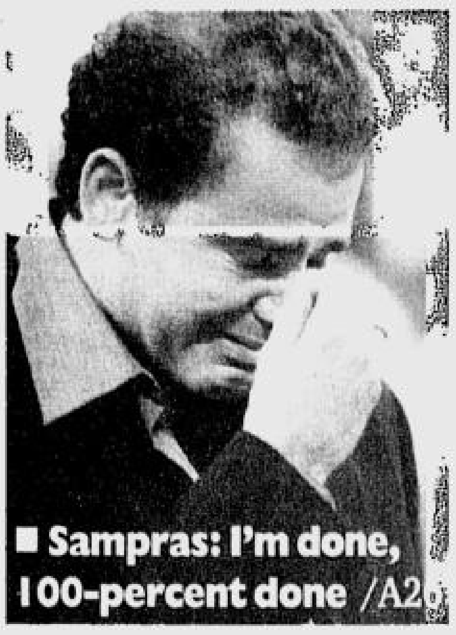
The PSC chair also clarified that electronics firm Samsung contributed to the Asian Games campaign last year only P20 million and not P60 million as earlier reported.

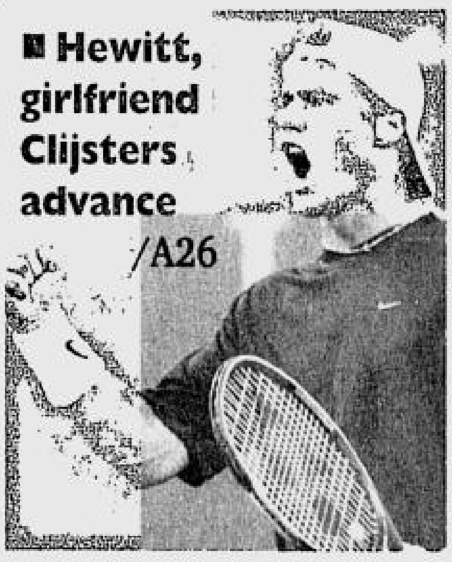
He said half of the amount went to the training uniforms purchased from Adidas while the remaining P10 million went to the national torch relay and pep rallies for athletes going to the Asiad.

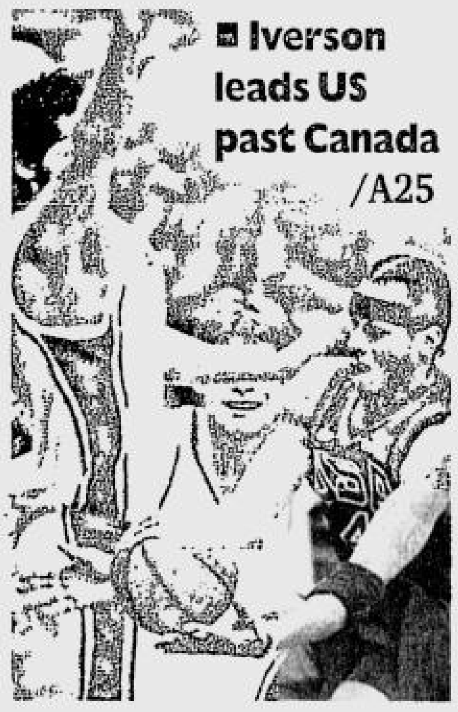
Adidas' support for the RP campaign in Busan came in the form of big discounts from the PSC's purchase of competition and official uniforms during the

PUENTEVELLA/ A25

WHAT'S INSIDE


■ Sampras: I'm done, 100-percent done /A26


■ Hewitt, girlfriend Clijsters advance /A26


■ Iverson leads US past Canada /A25

■ Reversals rock badminton tilt /A26

SPORTS TV

Compiled by L. Manguiat

TENNIS: US Open 2003: 7 a.m. (r-7 p.m.) and 11 p.m.—Catch live first and second round tennis action from Flushing Meadows, New York

BASKETBALL: Tournament of the Americas; 8:30 p.m.; Solar Sports; 11 p.m.; IBC 13 and Solar Sports—All roads lead to Athens as the competition gets tougher in Puerto Rico

Jazz vs Bulls, Game 6, 1997 Finals; 8 a.m. (r-5:30 p.m.); Solar Sports—With two seconds remaining on the clock, Chicago's Steve Kerr drains the game and series-winner as the Bulls beat the Utah Jazz, 90-86, to win their fifth title in seven years.

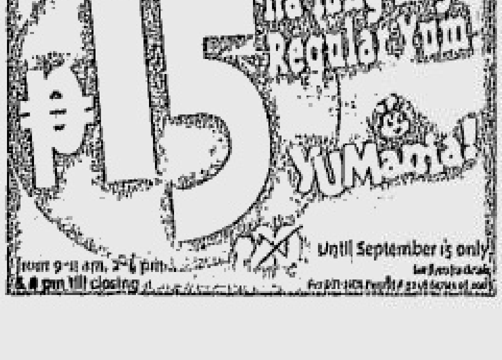
Cavs vs Nets, Game 3, 1992 Eastern First Round; 11 a.m.; Solar Sports—New Jersey sets a team playoff record for most assists in a game (34) as they stave off elimination.

MOTOR SPORTS: F1 Hungarian Grand Prix; 10:30 a.m. (r); Star Sports—Fill your need for speed with a replay of the race from Budapest.

GOLF: LPGA Wendy's Championship; 1:30 p.m.; ESPN—First round action tees off from Ohio

PGA Reno-Tahoe Open; 2:30 p.m.; Star Sports—Witness the final 18 holes of this PGA event.

Schedules subject to change without prior notice.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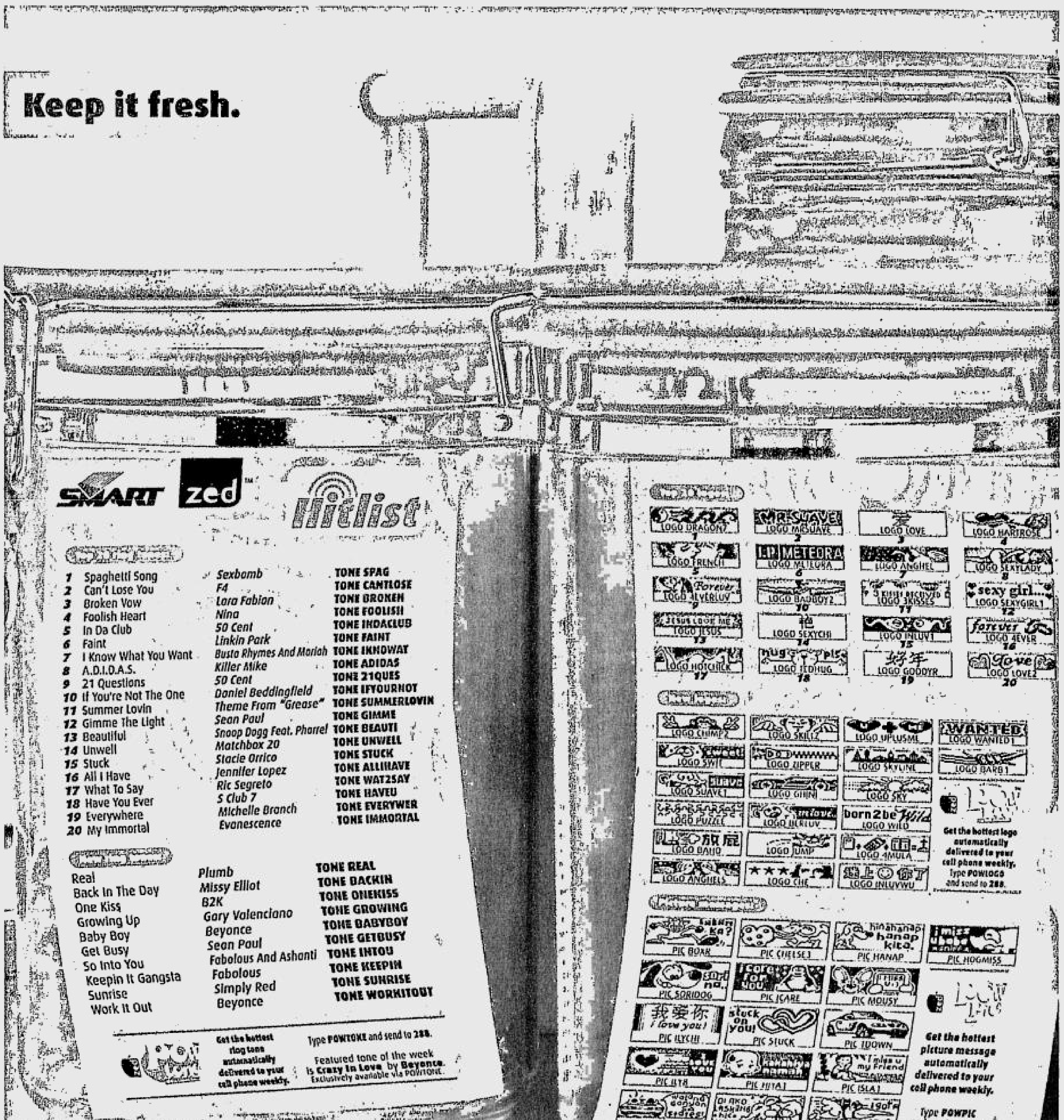
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4	Foolish Heart	Nina	TONE FOOLISH
5	In Da Club	50 Cent	TONE INDACLUB
6	Faint	Linkin Park	TONE FAINT
7	I Know What You Want	Busta Rhymes And Mariah	TONE IKNOWAT
8	A.D.I.D.A.S.	Killer Mike	TONE ADIDAS
9	21 Questions	50 Cent	TONE 21QUES
10	If You're Not The One	Daniel Beddingfield	TONE IFYOURNOT
11	Summer Lovin	Theme From "Grease"	TONE SUMMERLOVIN
12	Gimme The Light	Sean Paul	TONE GIMME
13	Beautiful	Snoop Dogg Feat. Pharrel	TONE BEAUTI
14	Unwell	Matchbox 20	TONE UNWELL
15	Stuck	Stacie Orrico	TONE STUCK
16	All I Have	Jennifer Lopez	TONE ALLIHAVE
17	What To Say	Ric Segreto	TONE WAT2SAY
18	Have You Ever	S Club 7	TONE HAVEU
19	Everywhere	Michelle Branch	TONE EVERYWER
20	My Immortal	Evanescence	TONE IMMORTAL

Real	Plumb	TONE REAL
Back In The Day	Missy Elliot	TONE BACKIN
One Kiss	B2K	TONE ONEKISS
Growing Up	Gary Valenciano	TONE GROWING
Baby Boy	Beyonce	TONE BABYBOY
Get Busy	Sean Paul	TONE GETBUSY
So Into You	Fabolous And Ashanti	TONE INTOU
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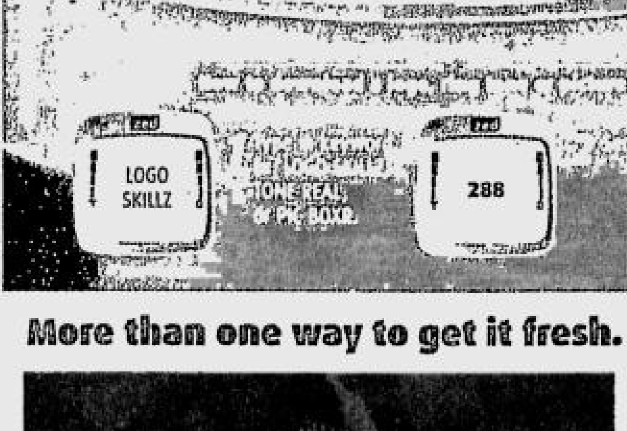
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STANDINGS	W	L	STANDINGS	W	L
SSC-R	8	4	SBC	6	5
Letran	7	4	UPHR	5	7
JRU	7	5	CSB	4	8
Mapua	6	5	PCU	3	8

GAMES TODAY (*Rizal Memorial Coliseum*)
11:30 a.m.—Mapua vs SBC (Jrs/Srs)
4 p.m.—Letran vs PCU (Srs/Jrs)

LETRAN aims to join defending champion San Sebastian College on the threshold of securing a Final Four slot as it collides with Philippine Christian University today in the NCAA basketball tournament at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

Mapua and San Beda College also try to improve their chances of grabbing a semifinal ticket when they part ways in the other senior tussle.

Both victimized by the University of Perpetual Help-Rizal Altas, the Cardinals and the Red Lions fell to a share of fourth place at 6-5 and were left hanging on the coattails of the Stags, Knights and JRU Heavy Bombers in the Final Four race.

Aside from seeking a share of the lead, the Knights (7-4) will try to exact revenge on the Dolphins, who humiliated them, 84-72, in the first round.

June Navarro

SPORTSWATCH

Harp, Locsin back

DAVONN Harp of Red Bull Barako and Noli Locsin of Talk 'N Text can see action in the PBA Reinforced Conference. In fact, Harp can play right away in the Baguio City opener pitting Red Bull against FedEx Express on Saturday. PBA Commissioner Noli Eala reinstated Harp and Locsin yesterday even as he reopened the cases of three other players serving drug-related suspensions. Harp and Locsin have tested positive in the PBA drug test but has since complied with the league's rehabilitation program, making them eligible for reinstatement. The 6-foot-3 Locsin's contract with TNT has expired, but he may yet be given a contract renewal by the Phone Pals.

Collins sprint king

SAINT-DENIS, France—Kim Collins sprinted to a surprise victory in the 100 meters at the World Championships on Monday as American runners failed to win a medal for the first time in eight years. The 27-year-old Collins, of the Caribbean island nation of St. Kitts and Nevis, won his first world title in a slow time of 10.07 seconds, with 18-year-old Darrel Brown of Trinidad and Tobago taking the silver and Britain's Darren Campbell the bronze. In a photo finish, Brown, Campbell and fourth-place finisher Dwain Chambers of Britain were all clocked in 10.08 seconds. World record-holder Tim Montgomery was fifth in 10.11, and fellow American Bernard Williams sixth in 10.13. Collins said celebrations in his tiny homeland—population less than 40,000—probably started the moment he crossed the line. **AP**

All set for Bates tourney

TODAY is the submission of entries to the Richard L. Bates 7-Stag National derby at Pasay City Cockpit, from 2 p.m. to 9 p.m. To be hosted by popular breeder Richard Bates, the event will start at 4 p.m. tomorrow, featuring the 3-stag elimination round. The championship round is on Aug. 30. Sponsors are Sagupaan Hammer, Sagupaan Mite Free and Sagupaan B-50 Forten. Meanwhile, another 5-stag event is scheduled on Sept. 5, with pit manager Eric de la Rosa as host. Entry fee is P15,000 and cash prize at stake is P400,000. Other derby schedules will be on Sept. 12 (4-stag/Boy de Roca) and Sept. 19 (5-stag/Ramon Mancenares/Patrick Antonio). For other details, interested parties may contact 843-1890, 843-1746 and 816-6750.

7-stag meet at Roligon

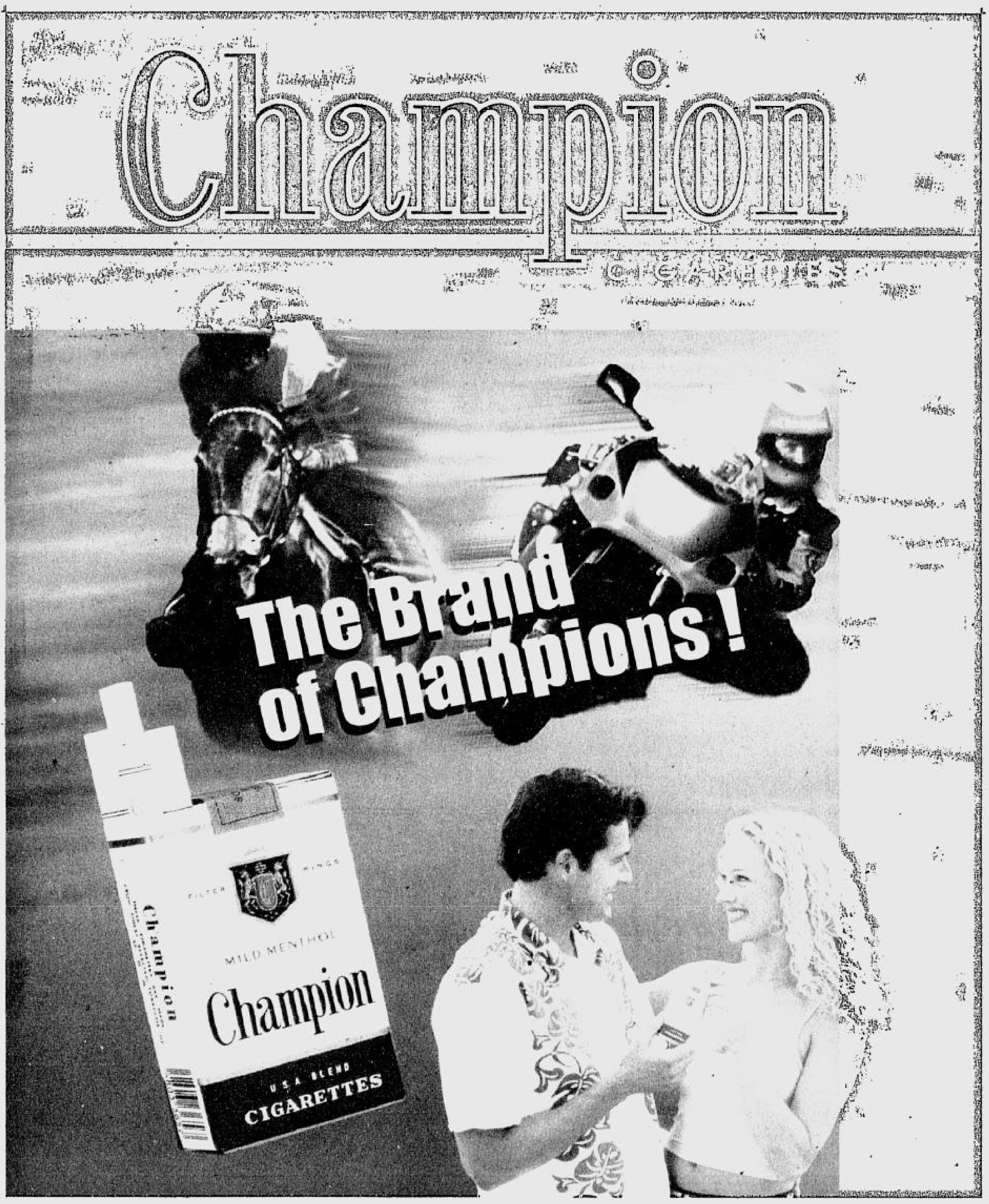
DUE to the numerous walk-in entries and the overwhelming support of gamefowl breeders associations, Roligon Mega Cockpit's Ray Showdown 7-Stag National Derby has been extended to a three-day affair. Derby hosts Danny Ty and Romero Yu said the event is now scheduled on Sept. 2, 4 and 6. Assisting the hosts are Shio and Roming Vergara. Participants may choose to field an entry in the elimination rounds (3-stag) on either Sept. 2 or 4. With over 120 participants expected to compete, the total guaranteed pot may reach P2 million, according to Ty. Entry fee is P18,000. The last two days of screening will be held this coming Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Interested parties may contact 833-2275 and 833-1638.

Paes has no brain cancer

ORLANDO, Florida—Leander Paes of India, who won the mixed doubles title at Wimbledon with Martina Navratilova last month, said Monday he is relieved that he is not suffering from a brain tumor. Paes, 30, has been hospitalized since last week. Test results released over the weekend found that he has neurocysticercosis, a parasitic infection that causes a brain abscess. "It's just a matter of time until I overcome this illness," Paes said at the M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Orlando where he went for treatment. A brain abscess is a mass of immune cells, pus and other material that can occur when the brain is infected by bacteria or fungus. Paes is taking albendazole, an antiparasitic medication, to shrink the abscess, steroids to reduce the swelling and an antiseizure medication. **AP**

Ateneo XI rips Mapua

ATENEO routed Mapua, 5-0, at its home pitch Sunday as the Blue Eagles notched their first win in the Ang Liga football Cup. A goal each by Mikkie Gimarino(10th minute), Tristan Tongson (35th), Dexter Versario (65th), Matt Jaucian (77th) and a penalty by Paul Merida in the 85th minute enabled the Ompong Merida-mentored Eagles to bounce back from their 8-0 defeat to the Bedans early in the week. Despite their second straight lopsided loss, Mapua coach Casper Ngo remains optimistic that this rookie-laden squad would eventually hit their stride. Far Eastern University banked on the hat trick of Kirk Magbalon (21, 34 and 81st minutes) to beat UP, 4-2, in the other encounter. Jake Mingoy accounted for FEU's other goal. UP got its goals from Ariel Zerrudo (40th minute) and Marco Mendezona (65th minute).



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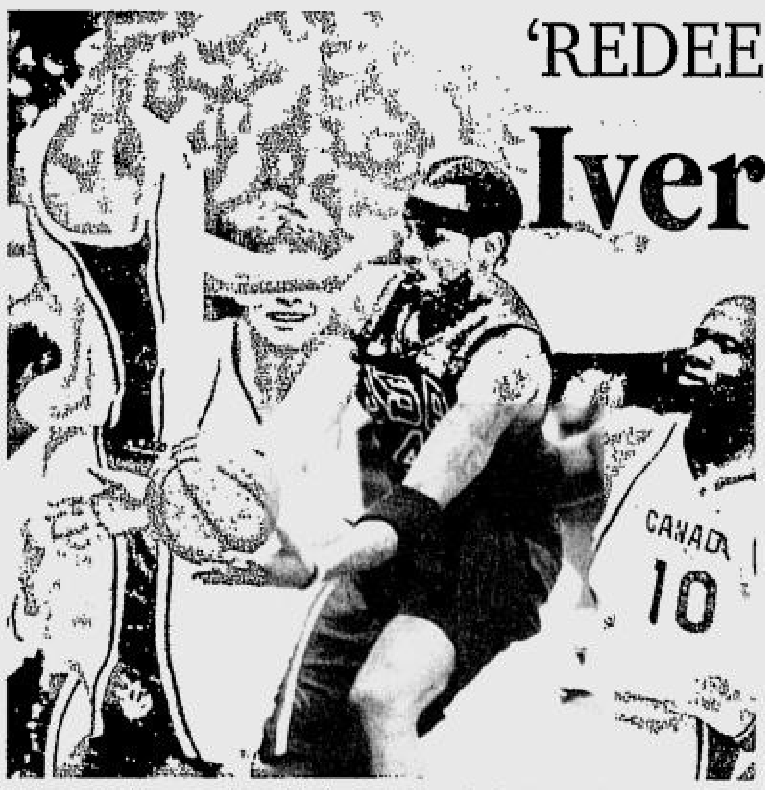
'REDEEM TEAM'

Iverson leads US past Canada



IVERSON slips past Canadian's Greg Francis (right) and Rowan Barrett. REUTERS

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico—Steve Nash led the way as Canada outplayed and outscored the United States in the first quarter, but Nash stayed on the bench for the rest of the game Monday in what eventually became a 111-71 victory for the Americans.

The Americans now face Argentina on Tuesday, the nation that last summer became the first team to defeat a US team comprised of professional players.

Argentina defeated Brazil 76-74 Monday in its first game of the second round, taking over sole possession of second place in the standings. It is widely expected that Argentina and the United States will play again this weekend, either in the semifinals or the gold medal game.

"We have to think in a future match-up, not tomorrow's game," Argentina forward Fabricio Oberto said.

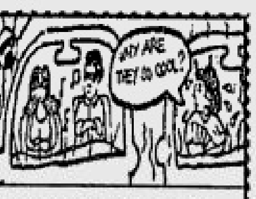
In Monday's other games, Mexico defeated the Dominican Republic 100-91 and Puerto Rico beat Venezuela 84-59.

Nash had five assists, including several on alley-oop dunks, as Canada led 28-21 at the end of the first quarter. But coach Jay Triano—apparently viewing the game as ultimately unwinnable—never put Nash back in.

The US team, playing without leading scorer Tracy McGrady (sprained back), outscored Canada 30-11 in the second quarter to take control for good. Allen Iverson made seven 3-pointers in the third quarter and finished with 28 points—the most by any American in this tournament.

Some have nicknamed this year's American squad the "Redeem Team," and, this will be their first chance to avenge one of the losses from last summer's World Championships when they finished a disappointing sixth.

Iverson had the highest point total ever for a US player in an Olympic qualifier. The old mark was 25 by Gary Payton against the Dominican Republic on July 19, 1999. Iverson also became the first US player to surpass 20 points in this tournament. *AP*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Now, PSC weight check may be necessary

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

THE PSC car park has lost its expensive glitter overnight.

There was a sudden change of scenery. Practically all the flashy, late-model vehicles were nowhere to be found at the tree-shaded special lot. They've been pulled out.

Imagine a stylish, glossy, overdressed gentleman—the talk of the town—losing all his classy garments overnight.

Nothing could be sorrier.

But that's the truth, texted my reliable informer, the same concerned fellow who previously tipped us off on the proliferation of flashy, late-model vehicles in that particular area at the storied Rizal Memorial Sports Complex.

In keeping with the times, we had suggested a lifestyle check on, yes, the PSC parking lot out there.

We were furnished the names of the PSC car fanciers, the initials of which we had printed here last time.

You know what? That decision caused instant excitement and agitation around Rizal Memorial.

Said one informer through a text message: *"Tuwa employees, tahimik sa itaas."*

Yes, the PSC employees were overjoyed, thankful for the report; but this, definitely, could not be said of their big bosses.

***

Let me explain that I feel a bit remorseful.

In the first place, who would like to punish an innocent car park? Change its rich, regal ambiance into the drabness of a junkyard?

But, to repeat, that previous column on the stunning, almost simultaneous arrival of new, expensive cars at the PSC area was honestly meant to raise two questions.

1) Have the years been materially rewarding to PSC chair Eric Buhain and his immediate staff?

2) Have these staffers progressed tremendously, way, way ahead of poor Philippine sports itself?

OK, we had maintained that these new cars could not be used to demand an investigation into the bank accounts of these lucky people.

All we had sincerely prayed for was for our athletes, mainly from the ill-fed national sports associations, to get their due share from the PSC budget.

It was rather flattering what one PSC commissioner next told us that our last column on suspicions of misdeeds in the RP amateur sports hierarchy had caused relief on the part of aggrieved sports associations and regions, mainly from the South.

***

There's no turning back now.

Rep. Monico Puentevella, quick on the draw, has ordered a lifestyle check on certain PSC staffers.

We have no idea how Mr. Puentevella, a former PSC commissioner himself, would conduct the probe.

An ocular investigation will not do because, as our sharp, keen-eyed informer had made it clear, majority of the flashy cars have been pulled out from the area.

Well, that frantic move that caused the place to lose its regal bearing could not be taken as a sign of outright guilt. *"Pero nakonsiyensiya 'ata* (But they've been bothered by their conscience)," offered someone through a text message yesterday.

Of course, there are other areas, mainly on money matters, that should consume the time and effort of Rep. Puentevella.

He may have to dig deep and determine if the PSC is regularly subjected to an honest, and we mean honest, audit.

In fact, we heard it from an insider, who got his info from one harassed commissioner, that the PSC board is divided on the matter of its alleged P80 million budget deficit.

It may no longer be in his area of concern, but Puentevella would do well to also check on the GSIS contributions of PSC contractual employees which reportedly have not been remitted.

This one could be petty, but it could also be worth Puentevella's time.

It's about the rice ration which PSC employees have not gotten for the last two quarters.

Said a complaining text message: "*Nag* introduce PSC *ng* quarterly one cavan of rice for every employee late in 2002. After 1st quarter of 2003, *wala na.*"

So, who have been consuming all the rice meant for the low-income workers at PSC?

Funny. But, after that lifestyle check we had suggested on the PSC car park, a weight check could help unravel who's the greediest that gobbled it up at the Philippine Sports Commission.

Puentevella timing . . .

From page A23

Asiad, he added.

Buhain also noted that the PSC is working on a budget deficit because there are not enough funds to finance approved requests for foreign stints by NSAs.

Buhain, who celebrated his 580th day as PSC chair by joining the boodle fight with some 400 national athletes yesterday, said 20 percent of the PSC budget of about P450 million goes to administrative expenses, while 80 percent goes to the needs of the NSAs.

RACING TIPS

AT SLLP BY MR. 999

Race 1--1. Show Affection/Socialize 2. Shotgun Banjo 3. Wing Away 4. Andrei's Billiard

Race 2--1. Calvin's Magic 2. Golden Prince 3. La Signorina 4. Big Boss/Secret Quest

Race 3--1. Scene Stealer 2. Ganda 3. Hellosilvergirl 4. Magnanimous 5. Caballero 6. Living Legend

Race 4--1. Sham Sham 2. Remarkable 3. Nitty Gritty 4. Sierra Madre 5. Richie Rich

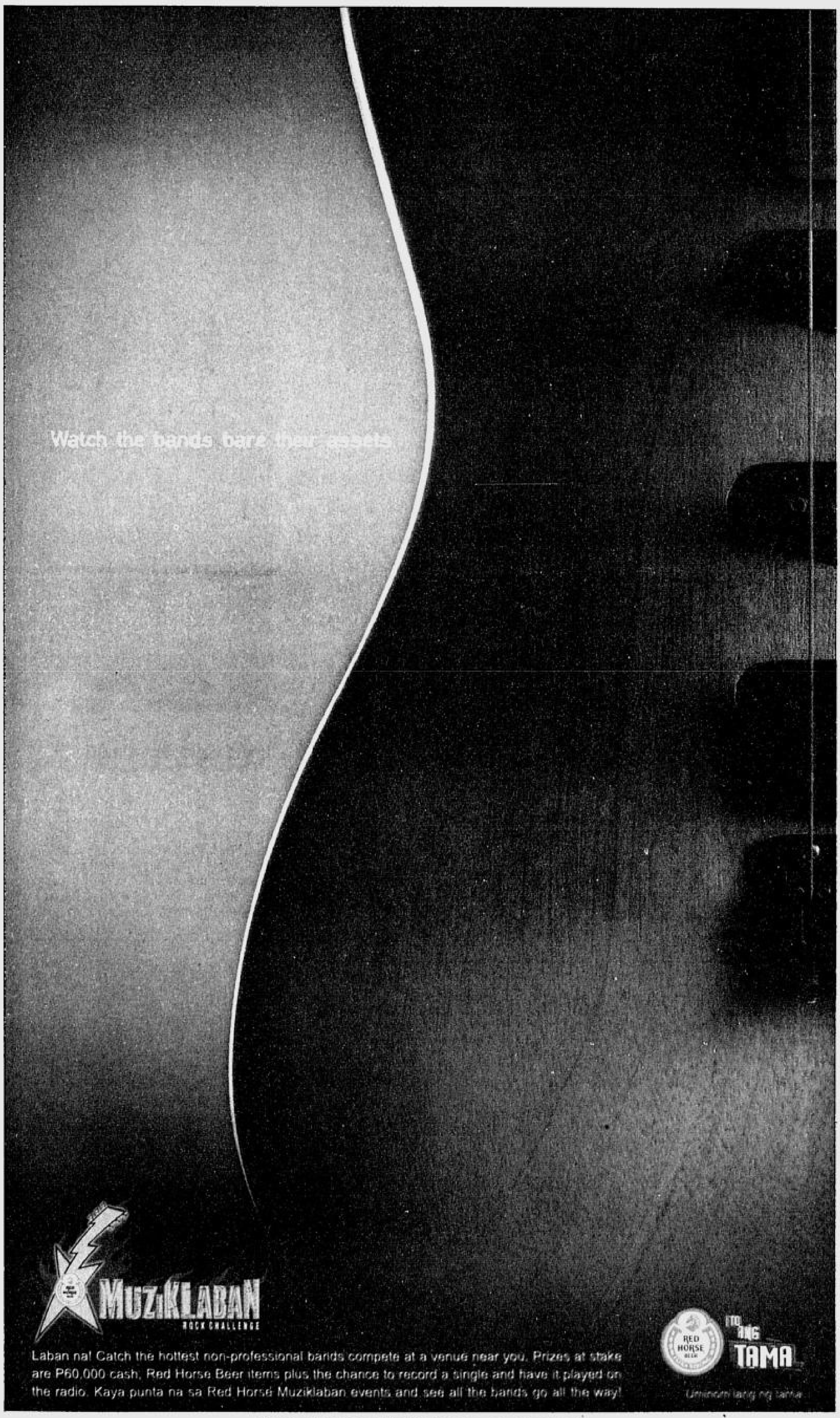
Race 5--1. Aspire 2. Cool Tights 3. Magical Charm 4. Western Legend 5. Pullian Beauty

Race 6--1. Sovereign Dancer 2. All Powerful 3. Main Street

Race 7--1. Siete de Marso 2. Advance Party 3. Earl Gray 4. Modern Classic 5. Irish Star

Race 8--1. Uncle Buck 2. Rama 3. Amuridik 4. Top Bullet

Race 9--1. D Pen Traveller 2. Crisel Joy 3. Timber Nectar 4. Dedicated 5. Brilliant Leader 6. Modul Queen



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ELIMINATIONS SCHEDULE (AUG. 28 - SEPT. 12)

DATE	VENUE	DATE	VENUE
Aug. 28, 2003	Limketkai, Cagayan de Oro	Sept. 5, 2003	Baluarte De San Diego, Intramuros, GMA *
Aug. 29, 2003	Tomas Morato, GMA *		Nice Place, Dagupan
	Nevada Square, Baguio		Jolos, Lucena
	The Venue, Laguna		RTR Plaza, Leyte
	Orosia Park, Cebu		Marina, Iloilo
	Jack's Ridge, Matina, Davao	Sept. 12, 2003	Westgate Center, Filinvest, Alabang, GMA
			Club Edge, Olongapo
			Garaho, Dumaguete
			JC Club Tapzihan, Gen. Santos

* Tune in to NU 107, 97.1 LSFM, Magic 89.9 and Killerbee or log on to www.redhorsebeer.com for updates and complete details.

Per DOH-BFAD Permit no. 551 Series of 2003. See flyers for details.

odyssey RGMA NETWORK INC. YAMAHA PULP

SAMPRAS: Formal farewell. AP

Sampras: I'm done, 100-percent done

NEW YORK—Pete Sampras carried his 9-month-old son instead of a racket bag as he took one last walk off center court to one last standing ovation.

No more titles to win. No more matches to play.

Sampras delivered a formal farewell to tennis on Monday at an on-court ceremony and earlier news conference at the US Open, not quite one year since he won the tournament in what turned out to be his final match.

"The process is now over. I'm 100-percent retired," Sampras said, his voice cracking. "I'm at peace with it. It's time to call it a career."

Sampras, who's 32 and became a father in November, leaves with 64 singles titles, including a record 14 at Grand Slam tournaments: seven at Wimbledon, five at the US Open, and two at the Australian Open.

"I will never sit here and say I'm the greatest ever. I've done what I've done in the game. I've won a number of majors—I think that's kind of the answer to everything," Sampras, wearing a black suit and gray shirt, said at the news conference on the first day of the US Open.

"I don't know if there's one best player of all time. I feel my game will match up to just about anybody. I played perfect tennis at times, in my mind."

Later, he was honored in a half-hour ceremony between the two night matches in Arthur Ashe Stadium. The crowd treated him to three extended standing ovations, while fellow major champions John McEnroe, Boris Becker and Jim Courier delivered speeches.

"I tried to serve like you. I couldn't do that. I tried to hit a big forehand like you. I couldn't do that," McEnroe said. "I also tried to act like Pete. Needless to say, I failed at that."

Sampras, known for his mild-mannered demeanor off and, often, on the court, wiped away tears during the tribute, which also included a three-minute highlight video with clips from each of his major final victories and taped words from Andre Agassi. *AP*

Hewitt, girlfriend Clijsters advance

NEW YORK—Former champion Lleyton Hewitt of Australia claimed a decisive win in his return to Flushing Meadow on Monday, downing Romania's Victor Hanescu 6-3, 6-2, 6-2 in the first round of the US Open.

To make the day complete, Hewitt's girlfriend, top seed Kim Clijsters of Belgium, won her first Grand Slam match since being ranked No. 1 by beating America's Amber Liu 6-2, 6-3.

No. 6 Hewitt, the 2001 US Open winner, Monday's result was his first Grand Slam match win since a first-round exit at Wimbledon.

It was a smoother performance for the former No. 1 player than he produced two months ago at the All England Club, where he became just the second defending champion to lose in the opening round since Wimbledon began in 1877.

Clijsters, only once an Open quarterfinalist, lost the first two games to Liu before taking winning in straight sets.

Clijsters replaced Williams atop the rankings two weeks ago, despite never having won a Grand Slam title, and now finds herself in the role of favorite.

Perhaps the greatest drama of the first day was produced by a player without so much as lifting a racket.

Pete Sampras, the owner of a record 14 Grand Slam singles titles, including five at the US Open, formally announced his retirement at a news conference, then was honored during a half-hour ceremony on the court in Arthur Ashe Stadium Monday night.

Sampras, who's 32 and became a father in November, leaves the game he dominated in the 1990s with 64 singles titles. He was ranked No. 1 a record 286 weeks and finished six years at No. 1, another mark.

Sampras hasn't played at all since beating Andre Agassi to win the 2002 US Open, but he never said he was quitting. His first major title also came in New York, in 1990.

"This is something that I love to do, and I've been doing since I was 7," Sampras said. "Saying 'goodbye' is not easy, but I know it's time, in my heart."

The crowd of 21,853 treated him to three extended standing ovations, while fellow major champions John McEnroe, Boris Becker and Jim Courier delivered speeches.

Without Sampras or the injured Serena Williams, it's the first US Open in more than 30 years missing both of the previous year's champions. That's lent an air of anyone-can-win to both draws, and Clijsters and the third-seeded Lindsay Davenport figure to be among the women who could take advantage.

Serena Williams' left knee surgery forced her to withdraw, while her sister Venus is sitting out with a stomach muscle strain. *AP*

CLIJSTERS: Love match. AP

HEWITT celebrates a point against Hanescu. AP

Pete's career titles

1990—Philadelphia, Manchester, US Open, Grand Slam Cup.

1991—Los Angeles, Indianapolis, Lyon, ATP World Championship-Frankfurt.

1992—Philadelphia, Kitzbuhel, TMS Cincinnati, Indianapolis, Lyon.

1993—Sydney, TMS Miami, Tokyo Outdoor, Hong Kong, Wimbledon, US Open, Lyon, Antwerp.

1994—Sydney, Australian Open, TMS Indian Wells, TMS Miami, Osaka, Tokyo, TMS Roma, Wimbledon, Antwerp, ATP World Championship-Frankfurt.

1995—TMS Indian Wells, Queen's, Wimbledon, US Open, TMS Paris.

1996--San Jose, Memphis, Hong Kong, Tokyo Outdoor, Indianapolis, US Open, Basel, ATP World Championship-Hannover.

1997—Australian Open, San Jose, Philadelphia, Wimbledon, TMS Cincinnati, Grand Slam Cup-Munich, TMS Paris, ATP World Championship-Hannover.

1998—Philadelphia, Atlanta, Wimbledon, Vienna.

1999—Queen's, Wimbledon, Los Angeles, TMS Cincinnati, ATP World Championship-Hannover.

2000—TMS Miami, Wimbledon.

2001—None.

2002--US Open. *AP*

Reversals rock badminton tilt

UPSETS marked the second day of action in the JVC Badminton championships yesterday as unseeded Wilson Frias and Jaime Junio ousted joint fifth-ranked players Wally Fernandez and Prospero Aguilar at the PSC Badminton Hall of the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex in Manila.

Frias, playing out of BCMI-FEU, outplayed Fernandez of Valle Verde in the deciding set of their thrilling duel to score a 17-9, 9-15, 15-7 victory and earn a seat in the round of 16 of the premier event.

On the other hand, Junio, a member of the UP-PAF team, easily beat Aguilar, 15-2, 15-5, in the lower bracket to join 14 others, led by the fancied duo of defending champion Ian Piencenaves and Kennevic Asuncion, into the next round.

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Marcus Chamat (Swe) vs. Rodney Morris (USA)
Alex Lely (Ned) vs. Ralf Souquet (Ger)
Warren Kiamco (Phil) vs. Steve Davis (Eng)
Bata Reyes (Phil) vs. Roxton Chapman (Eng)

August 28 at 7:00 pm
Bebeng Gallego (Phil) vs. Tony Drago (Mal)
Alex Pagulayan (Can) vs. Danny Harriman (USA)

August 29 at 5:00 pm
Fabio Petroni (Ital) vs. Alex Lely (Ned)
Earl Strickland (USA) vs. Mark Williams (USA)
Bata Reyes (Phil) vs. Johnny Archer (USA)

August 30 at 7:30 pm
Django Bustamante (Phil) vs. Oliver Ortmann (Ger)

**Succeeding matches to be announced.*

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'Sabong' takes center stage at Big Dome

CLEAN LIVING
Manolo R. Iñigo

COCKFIGHTING or *sabong* in local parlance, takes the spotlight on Sept. 1-3 during the opening leg of the annual National Cockers Association (NCA) 7-Stag Derby at the Araneta Coliseum.

Featuring the winning lines of renowned cocker-breeders, this blue-ribbon affair will be hosted by former NCA Cocker of the Year Mario Villamor, up-and-coming Ruel Ricafort and Jun Santiago, the cocker's cocker.

Alongside basketball, cockfighting is a certified crowd-drawer. What makes it tick?

An authentic Philippine sport and the Filipinos' favorite pastime, *sabong* is enjoying tremendous mass appeal because it is fair and honest. On any given day, most especially on a Sunday, cockfights are held before thousands of *sabungeros* in more than 1,500 registered cockpits all over the country.

"That is why we are leaving nothing to chance to preserve this time-honored tradition of honesty and fair play," said Villamor, who is making his first big-time derby promotion at the Big Dome after a long absence. "The fans will surely get their money's worth by witnessing fast, furious and quality fights in our promotion."

Among the prominent figures taking part in the derby are Big Dome owner Nene Araneta, SMB big boss Danding Cojuangco, the ageless James Chiongbian, three-term Rizal Gov. Ito Ynares, former PBA Commissioner Rudy Salud, hotelier Biboy Enriquez, 2003 NCA Cocker of the Year Claude Bautista, Matt Bitanga, Jake and Butch Macasaet, Pampanga's Madlambayan and Jingco brothers, Dicky Lim, Eddie Araneta of Liza Galore Farms, Alex and Gerry Escalona and noted breeder Boy Jiao.

***

THE PAST OLYMPIANS. In Mexico City in 1968, American Bob Beamon won the gold medal in the long jump with an incredible leap of 29 feet, 2-1/2 inches, becoming the first man in track and field history to jump over 29 feet. Beamon's record jump stood for 23 long years. Also in Mexico, American runners Tommie Smith and John Carlos, winners of the gold and bronze medal, respectively, in the 200 meters, took the stand without shoes and gave the Black Power salute to protest racism in the United States... The Munich Olympics in 1972 belonged to American swimmer Mark Spitz, who won seven gold medals and Russian gymnast Olga Korbut, who captured three golds and a silver. But the Games were marred by tragedy when eight Palestinian terrorists killed 11 Israeli athletes and coaches... At 14, Romanian gymnast Nadia Comaneci stunned the world when she became the first gymnast in Olympic history to be awarded a perfect 10 score in the balance beam in Montreal in 1976. She went on to score seven perfect 10s in the Games. American decathlete Bruce Jenner and boxer Sugar Ray Leonard and Cuban runner Alberto Juantorena also accomplished gold-medal performances... The Moscow Games in 1980 were hurt by a US-led boycott of 62 nations to protest the Russian invasion of Afghanistan. Powerful Cuban boxer Teofilo Stevenson won the heavyweight gold medal in three consecutive Olympic Games—1972, 1976 and 1980—ranking him with Lazlo Papp of Hungary as the only two boxers to achieve that feat. He refused many tempting offers to turn pro and fight the likes of Muhammad Ali and Smokin' Joe Frazier in bouts worth millions of dollars.

***

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTION. What do the colors in the Olympic rings stand for? Answer, Blue stands for Europe, yellow for Asia, black for Africa, green for Australia and red for the Americas.

For inquiries, call telefax (044) 933-1214. My e-mail address: manolo@yahoo.com

Pops Fernandez changes her tune for Crossover

FERNANDEZ

ON THURSDAY, Sept. 11, concert queen Pops Fernandez steps out of her usual image when she performs in 105.1 Crossover's "Crossover Presents" concert series at the Captain's Bar of the Mandarin Oriental.

Pops, whose shows are always a sellout, whose fashion always makes a statement, and whose music always makes people dance, will take her audience on a rare and relaxing musical journey with her favorite tunes in this one-night-only engagement.

The concert will show highlights in the concert queen's life and career through her songs.

"I can relate to most of the songs," says Pops. "It is truly amazing how we remember certain events in our lives when we hear a particular song, and I think that's absolutely powerful."

Joining Pops in the show is special guest Chad Borja, plus the musicians of the Crossover band.

Also featured is The Opera quartet

POPS/ A28

SHOW TIME

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	CLOSED
MIRAMAR	SEX BOMB / RAMPADORA
ODEON	X-MEN 2
ODEON-2	BUKID AY BASA / KASIBULAN
ROBEN	BOLD STAR
TANDEM-1	SUGAT
TANDEM-2	KATAWAN MO LANGIT KO
TIMES	SPY : LEGEND OF CROCODILE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	ORIGINAL SIN
ACT-4	HANGGANG KAILAN KA PAPATAY
CORONET A	NENA INOCENTE
CORONET B	A MAN APART
QUEZON-1	BERTUD NG PUTIK
REMAR	X-MEN 2
REMAR-2	BOLD STAR
NOVA MALL - NOVALICHES CINEMA	
A	NENA INOCENTE
B	SNAKE LADY
C	
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CINEMA-2	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-5401 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	NOON AT NGAYON
CINEMA-2	NENA INOCENTE
CINEMA-3	LXG
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	TOMB RAIDER 2
CINEMA-6	ALEX & EMMA
CINEMA-7	KEKA
CINEMA-8	BAD BOYS 2
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	ITALIAN JOB
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	SPY KIDS 3D
CINEMA-12	WAKING UP IN RENO
CINEMA-14	FINDING NEMO
CINEMA-15	VIEW FROM THE TOP
LORES	
CINEMA-2	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-3	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT

(LAS PINAS)	LXG
CINEMA-1	NOON AT NGAYON
CINEMA-2	IMPOSTOR
CINEMA-4	MOTE
UNIWIDE COASTAL MALL	
(PARANAQUE)	SENSUAL ISLAND
CINEMA-1	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
CINEMA-2	MEN IN BLACK II
CINEMA-4	SELDA

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ITALIAN JOB R13 1:10,3:25,5:40,7:55,10:10	A VIEW FROM TOP PG13 1:30,3:30,5:30,7:30,9:30	PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN PG13 11:40,2:30,5:10,7:50,10:30

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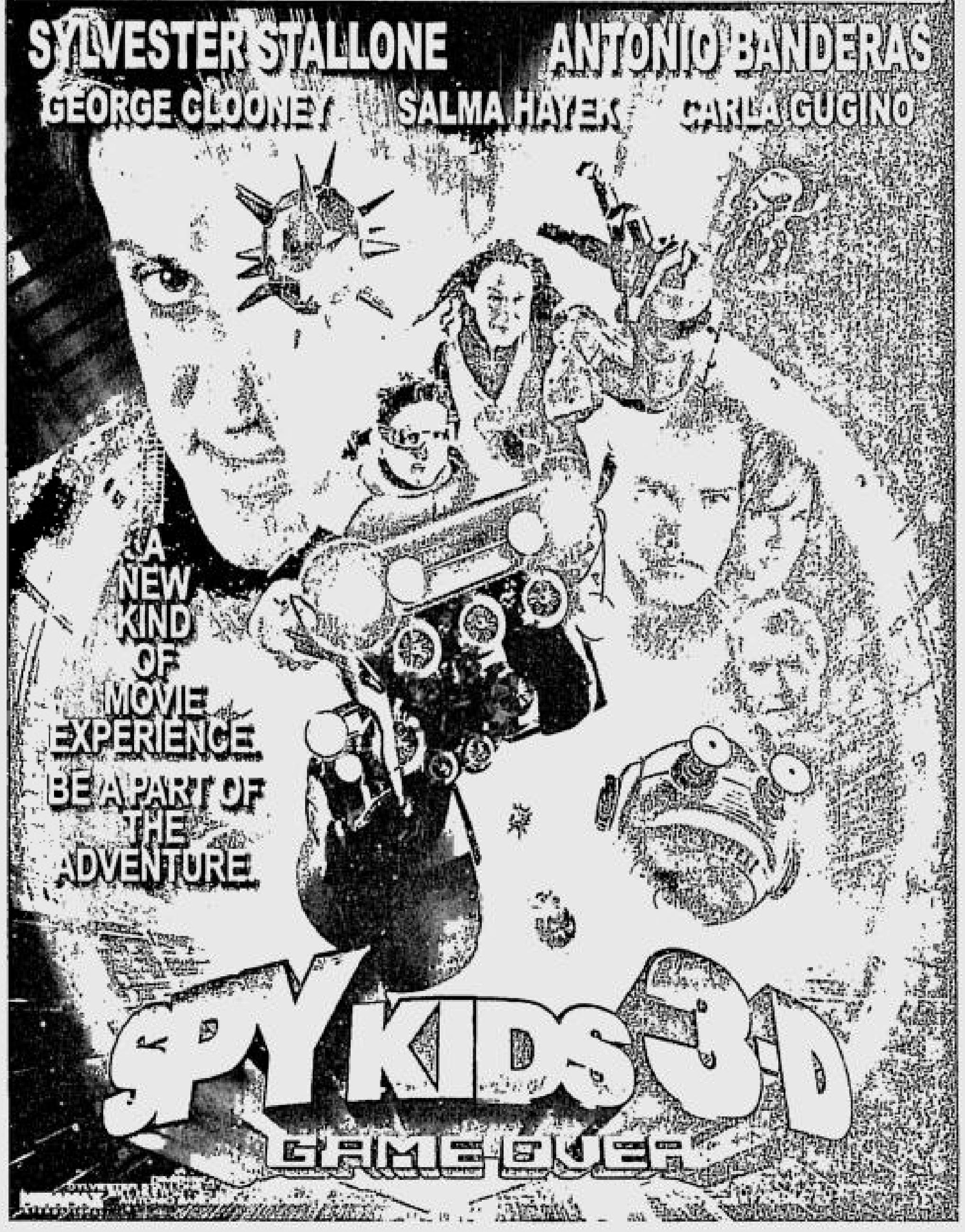
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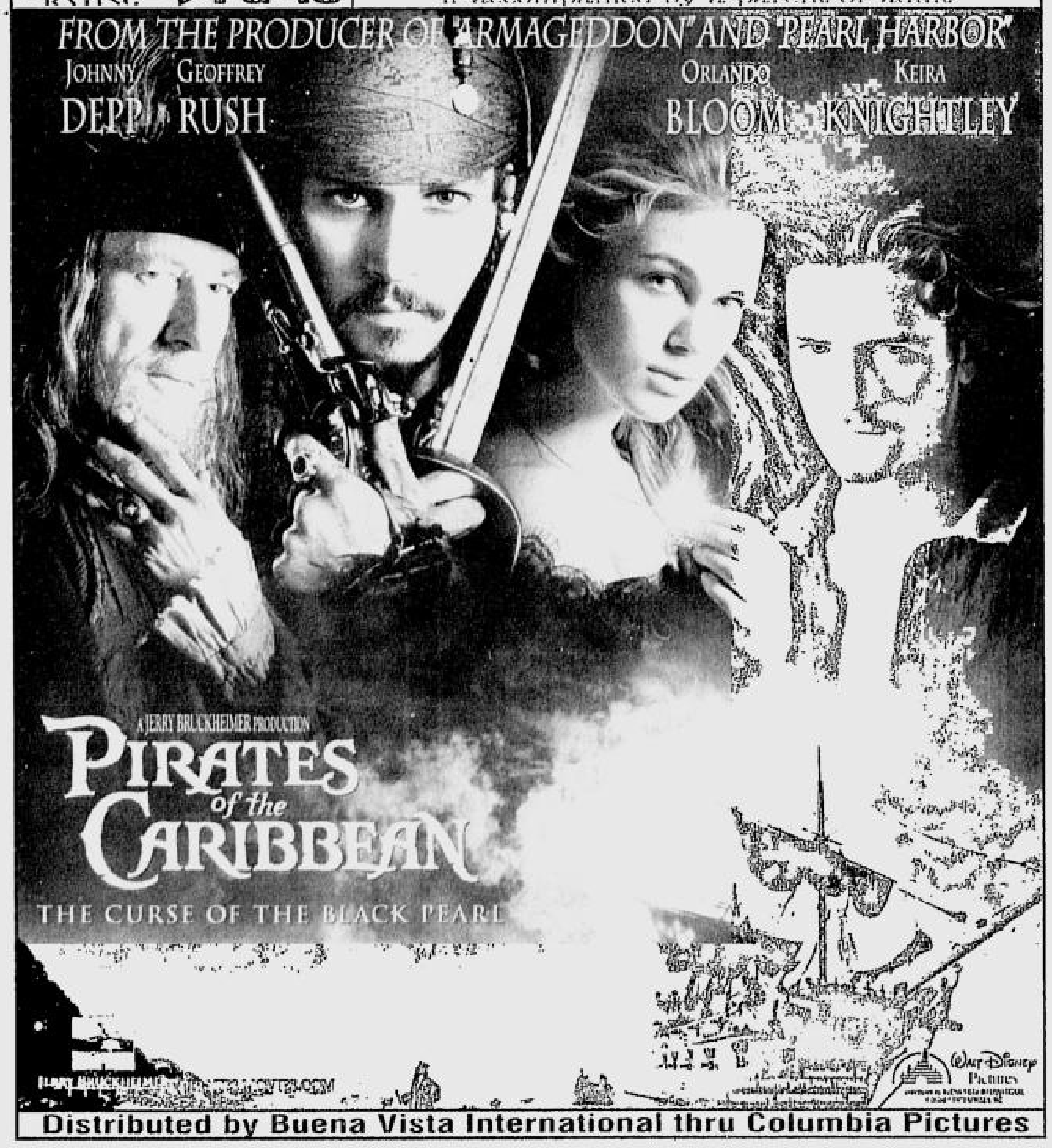
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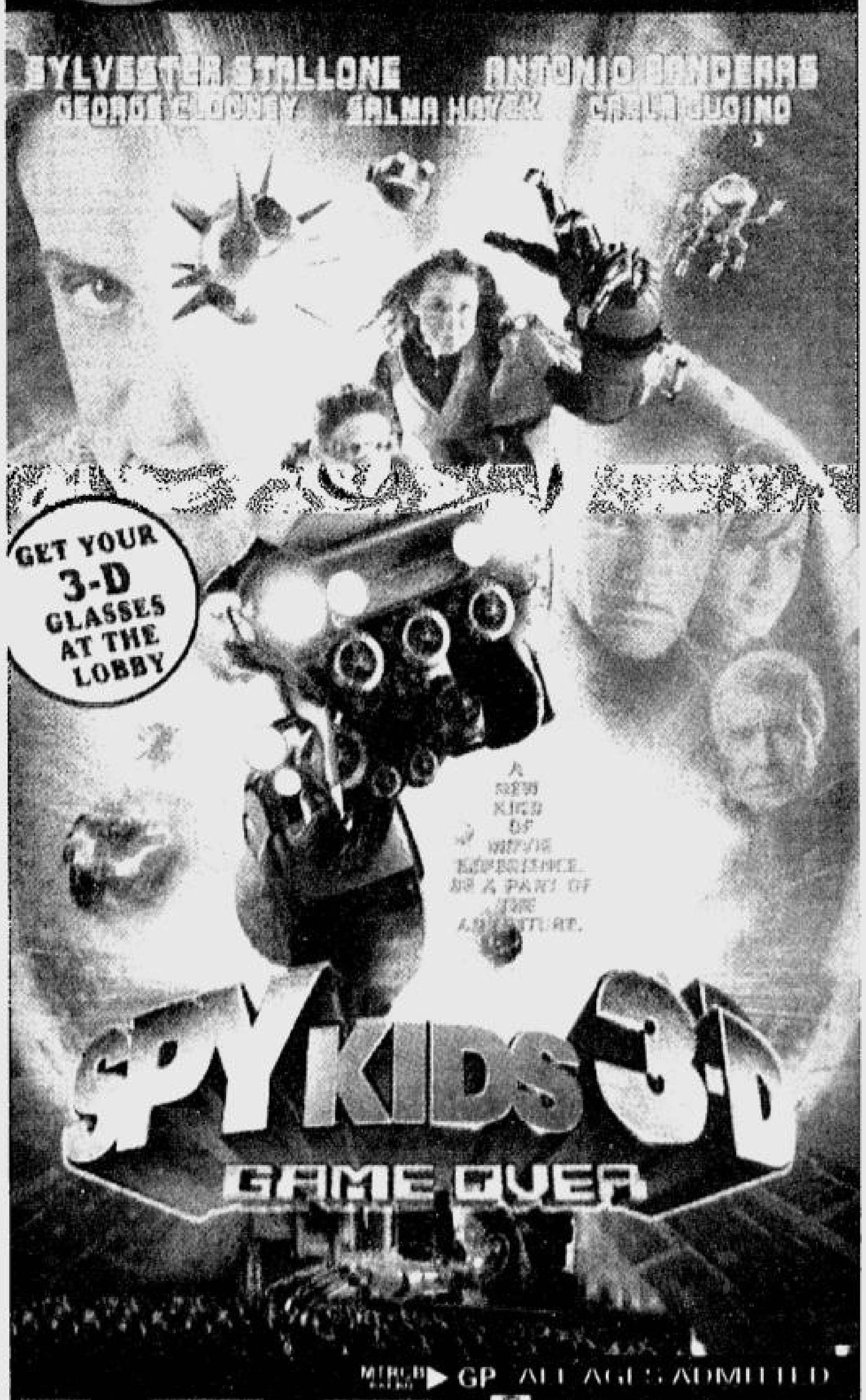
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SPY KIDS 3-D
GAME OVER

MTRCB RATING ▶ GP ALL AGES ADMITTED
Sweet Juicy
Globe Prepaid
Swift

SHOW TIME

Showdown at the FAT

TWELVE of the country's sexiest stars square off in "Showgirls: A Dance Concert" on Saturday, Aug. 30, at the Folk Arts Theater.

Screen sirens Aubrey Miles, Jenny Miller, April Tolentino, Michelle Estevez, Cherry Lou, Angelika Jones, Priscilla Almeda, Aleck Bovick, Geneva Cruz, Michelle Bayle, Regine Tolentino and Angela Velez will star in the all-new show featuring Las-Vegas style production numbers, Hollywood-inspired sets and costumes and eye-popping special effects.

The stars will perform numbers inspired by movies like "Moulin Rouge," "Charlie's Angels" and "Flashdance."

"This will be the biggest show of this series, but it will be a totally different presentation, with all-new costumes, music and production numbers," say directors Calvin Neria and Duds Santiago of Cast and Crew.

It will also be the most expensive Showgirls production to date. The sets alone cost well over a million pesos, according to directors Neria and Santiago.

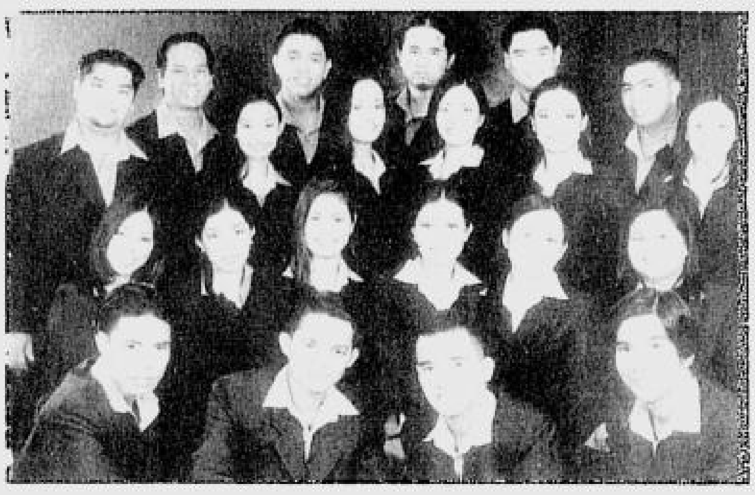
Backing the stars will be Groove Manila, Speed and the Whiplash dancers. Special guests will be Marissa Sanchez, Ate Glow and Gladys Guevara.

"Showgirls: A Dance Concert" is a production of Live Artists Production and Red Chair Production.

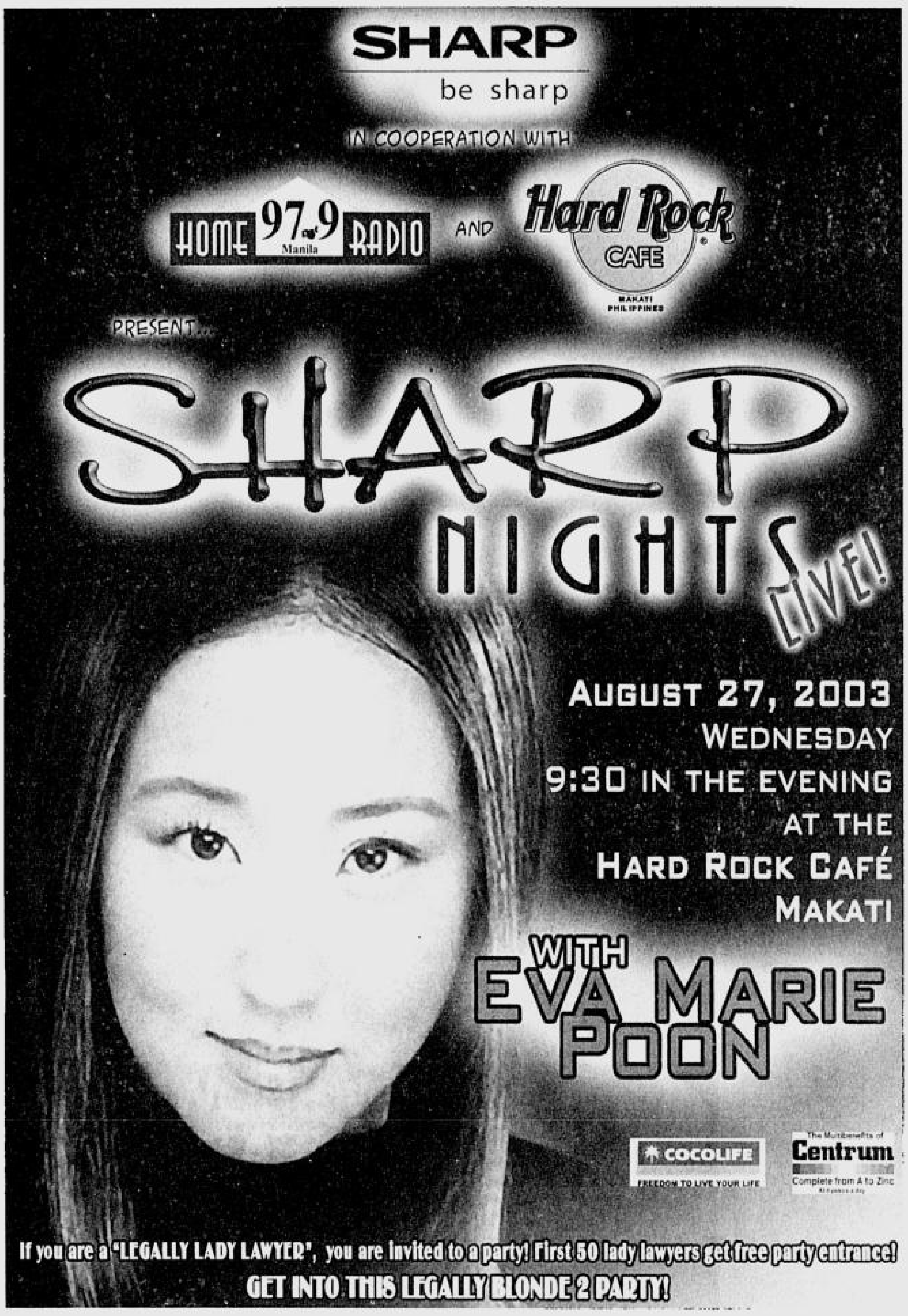
For ticket inquiries, call Ticketworld, 891-5610; Live Artists, 920-2643; or Red Chair, 829-5109.

DID YOU KNOW...

Veteran actress **Gina Pareño** was seen buying medicines at the Mercury Drug branch at the Glorietta in Makati one recent Saturday afternoon. Gina, who is a standout in comedy as well as in drama, was with a female companion. Gina was among the famous Stars of '66, a group of popular young stars launched by Sampaguita Pictures that year.



CONCERT TOUR
The Mapua Concert Singers, 22 engineering students from the Mapua Institute of Technology under the directorship of Patrick Frias, has embarked on its first North American concert tour to perform in US and Canadian cities.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Araneta Center
ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE

ALI MALL CINEPLEX 7

Ali 1	KEKA
Ali 2	NOON AT NGAYON
Ali 3	SPY KIDS 3
Ali 4	PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN
Ali 5	ITALIAN JOB
Ali 6	FINDING NEMO
Ali 7	LXG

ARANETA COLISEUM

AUG 28	UAAP GAMES . UP VS. DLSU
AUG 30	UAAP GAMES : FEU VS. UE
SEPT 1	NCA 7-STAG DERBY
SEPT 3	NCA 7-STAG DERBY
SEPT 4	UAAP GAMES : ADMU VS. UST
SEPT 6	UAAP CHEERING COMPETITION
Opens December 2003	DISNEY ON ICE Featuring "Beauty & The Beast"

Star Records to issue...

From page A30

Bobby Chang of BMG Music Publishing Inc. in New York had sent to BMG Pilipinas. Chang said Star Records not only failed to give credit to Careers-BMG Publishing Inc. and Floating Note Music, owner of the rights to the Troccoli song, but also altered the lyrics of the song and "grossly misspelled" the names of its composers.

Troccoli and Bill Montvilo composed and released the song in 1994 in Troccoli's "My Life is in Your Hands" album.

"It's not true that we did not give credit to BMG Records," said Ngo. "In fact, I have with me the payment for the right to use the song. The check will be sent to BMG Pilipinas anytime this week."

Ngo said Rivera will promote the repackaged album in a concert titled "Seasons of Love" at the Sto. Domingo Church in Quezon City on Oct. 20, with the University of Santo Tomas 13-piece string orchestra.

The repackaged album will also contain two Christmas songs and "Let There Be Peace on Earth" by Sy Miller and Jill Jackson, according to Ngo.

Pops...

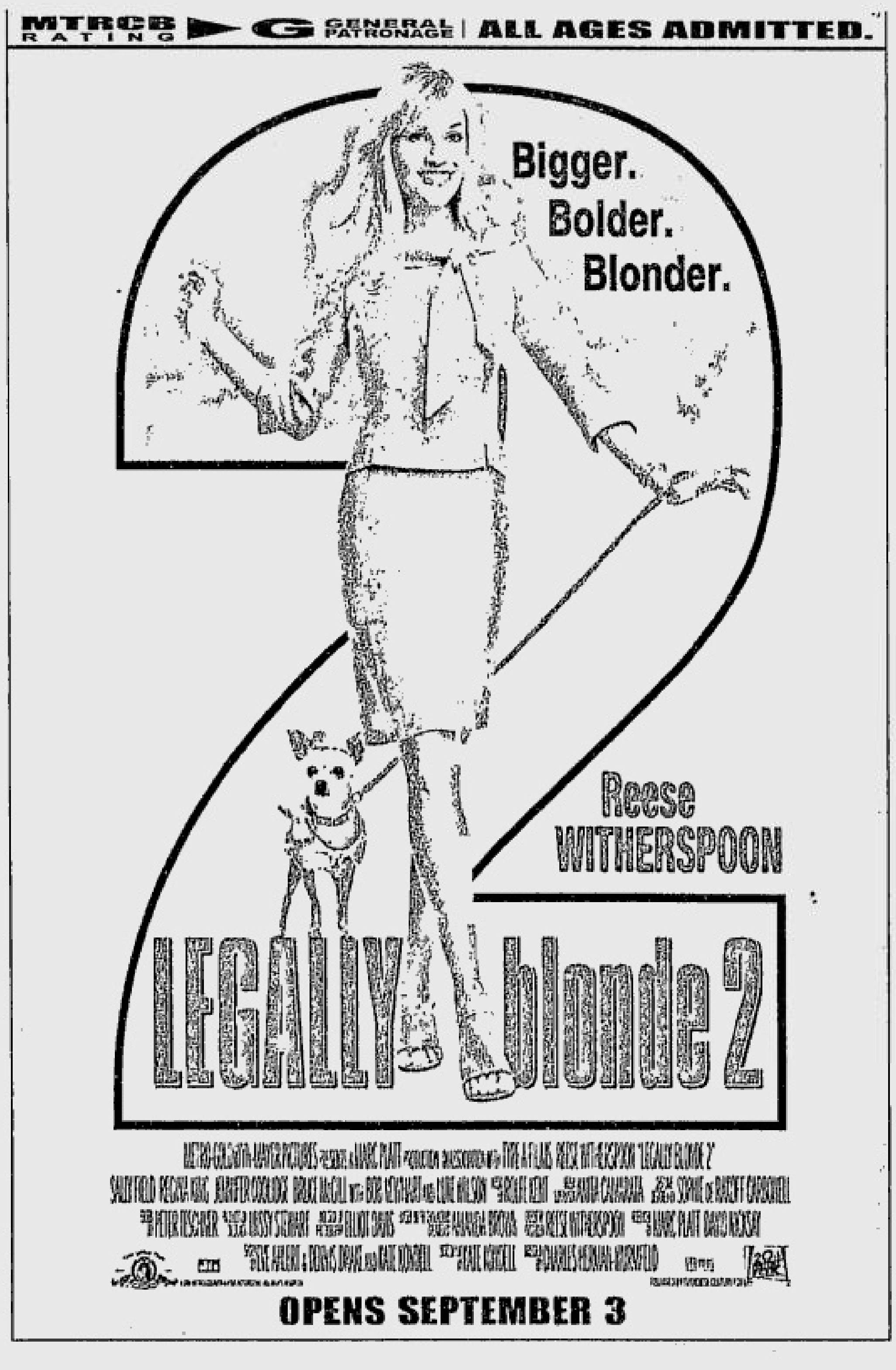
From page A27

composed of Manolo, Zebedee, Cecille and Sushi, as well as the instrumental group Da Capo which will perform soothing Crossover tunes at 8 p.m.

The storybook life of the concert queen will be interpreted with some of her favorite tunes like "The Best Days," "Old Songs," "Break It to Me Gently," "Constantly," "By Heart" and "Whenever, Wherever, Whatever," songs that Pops has never sung in her other shows.

The music will trace Pops' life, from as early as her childhood to her start in the entertainment business, her awakening to the joys and pains of love, and her transformation into a woman, wife, mother and show biz icon.

For ticket inquiries about "Crossover Presents Pops Fernandez," call Crossover at 712-9764 or 712-9755, Ticket World at 891-5610 or Captain's Bar at 750-8888.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Business as usual

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

DESPITE its change of location from *riles* to airport, **Dolphy's** "adjusted" sitcom, which premiered last Saturday, Aug. 17, was pretty much business as usual.

True, new characters were introduced, but were really generally dated in concept and performance.

Take the ditzy character played by **Aubrey Miles**—her comic shtick is her *mali-mali* way with language, which is a throwback to **Maria Carlson's** comedy routines many years ago, among others.

To their credit, both old and new members of the cast performed energetically. After a while, however, predictability held sway.

It's disconcerting to see that, after all these years, the main conflict here is still between Dolphy's nice character and a new "nasty" nemesis.

After previous Dolphy sidekicks and/or *kontrabidas* like **Panchito Alba** and **Babalu,** "Home Along the Airport" trots out his latest foe in the person of **Long Mejia,** who owns the small piece of land on which Dolphy's new home stands, and makes sure that our comic hero doesn't forget it.

Dolphy is all praises for his new co-star, but the premiere telecast of "Airport" didn't affirm his enthusiasm. Long is quick with the acidic retort and bemuses with his smug estimation of himself, but he's no Panchito.

We'll keep watching the show to see if he will grow into his role. As for the "adjusted" sitcom's other characters, we hope that they will go beyond basic "energy," so the show can go from merely proficient diversion to truly reenergized entertainment with a genuine sense of fun.

'Saludo Filipino'

The 2003 MCO Arts Festival presents the ballet show "Saludo Filipino" at 4 p.m. on Sept. 7 at the Francisco Santiago Hall in Makati. Featured are dances choreographed by **Tony Fabella, Eric Cruz, Jojo Lucila, Ianne Damian and Steve Villaruz,** to be performed by dancers from the Vella C. Damian School of Ballet.

The dances—"Corelliana," "Adda Kami," "Mosque Baroque," "Panaginip" and "Saludo"—express the richness of Filipino culture, tradition and sentiments. Call 818-1403, local 2630.

'Pirates' clicks

Movies about pirates generally don't do well at the tills, but **Gore Verbinski's** "Pirates of the Caribbean" has turned out to be one of the most popular films of 2003, with a gross of $250 million—and counting.

Since an income of $100 million spells a hit, $250 million means that "Pirates" is a mega-blockbuster. What counts for its exceptional popularity?

We think it's the movie's combination of special effects and its yarn about pirates who are cursed to be among the living dead, turning into skeletons when they're hit by moonlight.

The production's star value is also a big plus. Its roster of stars is led by **Johnny Depp,** who's known for his eccentric characterizations.

This time out, he's cast as Capt. Jack Sparrow. Verbinski describes the character as "a con man, lazy—a great pirate, but he isn't going to fight if he doesn't have to.

The production gave Depp a free hand in creating the ornery captain. And he's come up with a portrait of a very shrewd survivor who can charm the pants or bloomers off everyone he meets.

Captain Jack sparrow's physical appearance is an entertaining composite of different inspirations. Depp shares that he modeled a large part of the character after the legendary Rolling Stones guitarist **Keith Richards.** He added a bit of the cartoon character Pepe Le Pew, and tossed in some modern-day Rastafarian!

After "Pirates," Depp will next be seen in "Once Upon a Time in Mexico," where he plays a corrupt CIA agent. Another idiosyncratic character coming up!

FM radio for Cavite listeners

THE BOMB 99.9 FM, a radio station in Cavite, is providing listeners in the province with a mix of R&B, hip hop and pop music.

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Listeners in the province can air their views, ideas and greetings through The Bomb by texting the station at (0917) 827-9999.

Diane Lane to marry Streisand son

SHOW STOPPER

NEW YORK— Diane Lane said she wasn't nervous about meeting her future mother-in-law, Barbra Streisand.

"I'd met her before on `Yentl,'" said the actress, who's marrying Streisand's stepson, Josh Brolin.

"I've been around and I've met Barbra on different occasions for different reasons at different times," Lane added. "She'd forgotten that she'd read me for 'Yentl' and I was like, 'Good! Please lose the tape!'"

Lane, 38, said Brolin, 35, got down on one knee and popped the question on the Fourth of July. "It was early, early, early, early in the morning," Lane told AP Radio. "Like dawn."

She said they haven't set a wedding date yet because they're both so busy with work. Lane co-stars in the film "Under the Tuscan Sun," opening Sept. 26.

She was nominated for a best actress Oscar for her performance as Richard Gere's wife who cheated on him with hunk Olivier Martinez in "Unfaithful."

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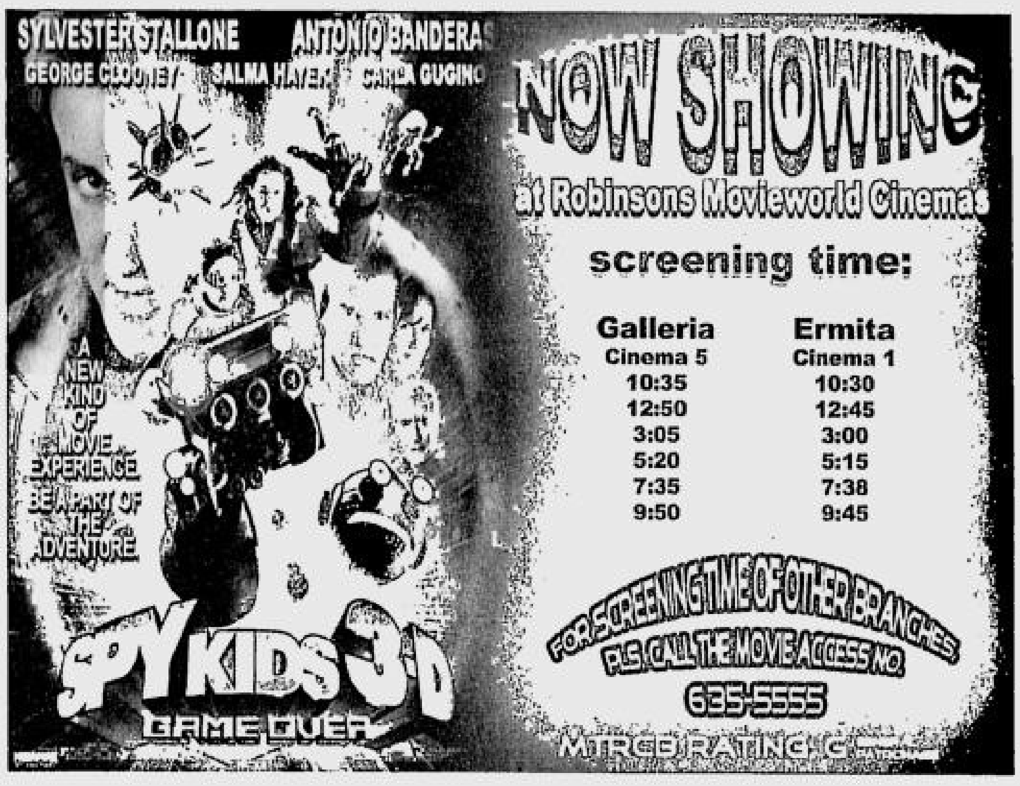
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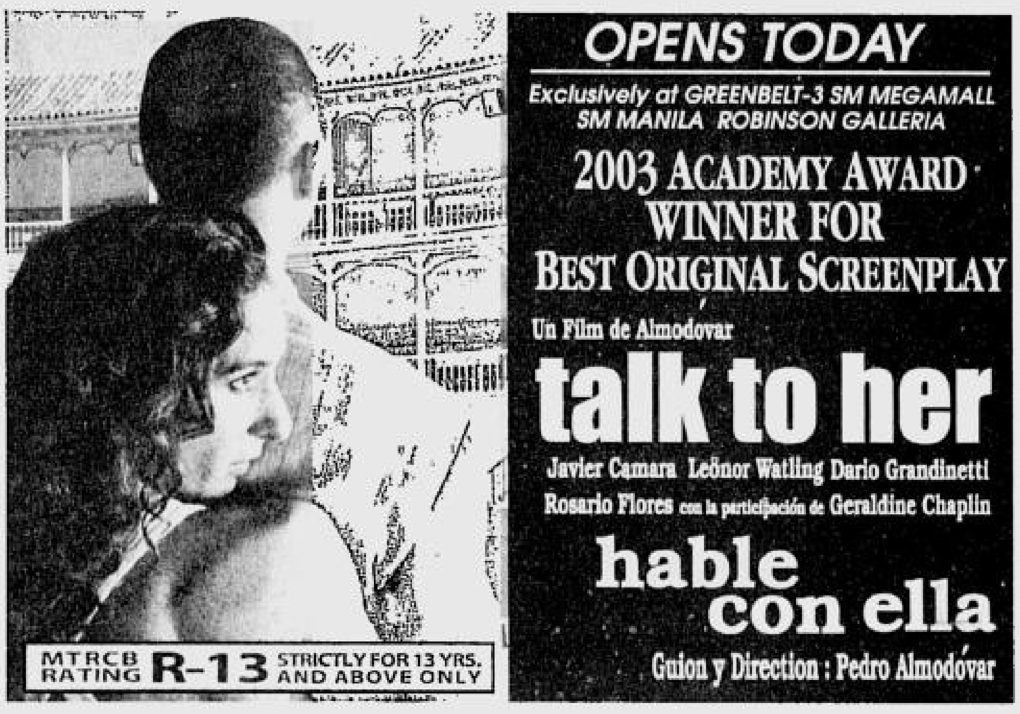
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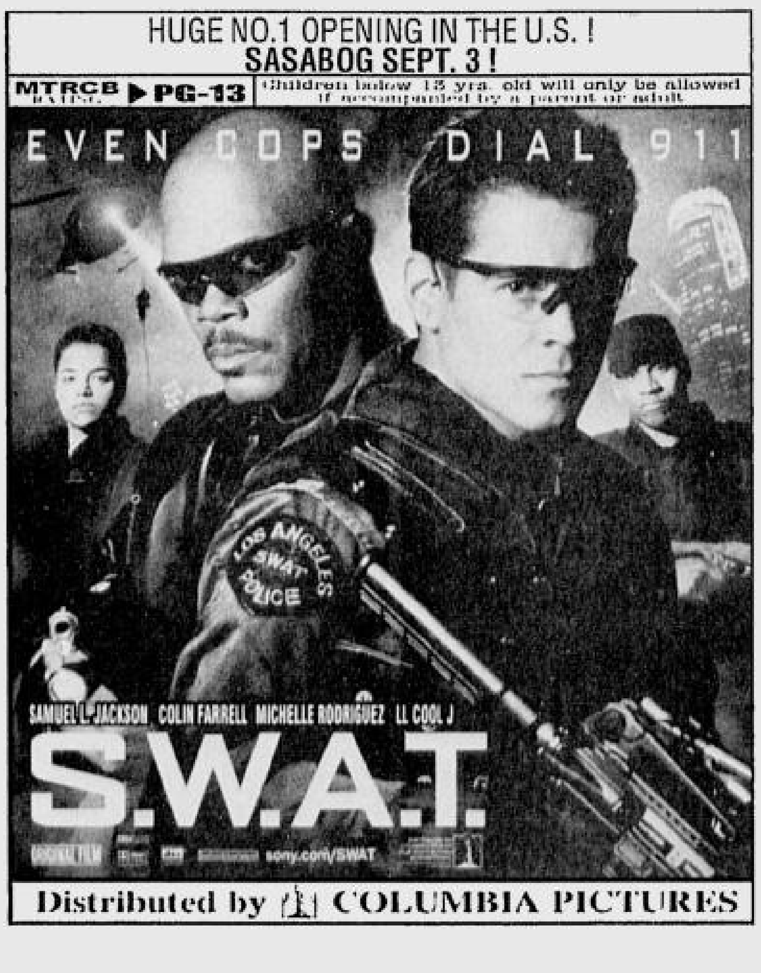
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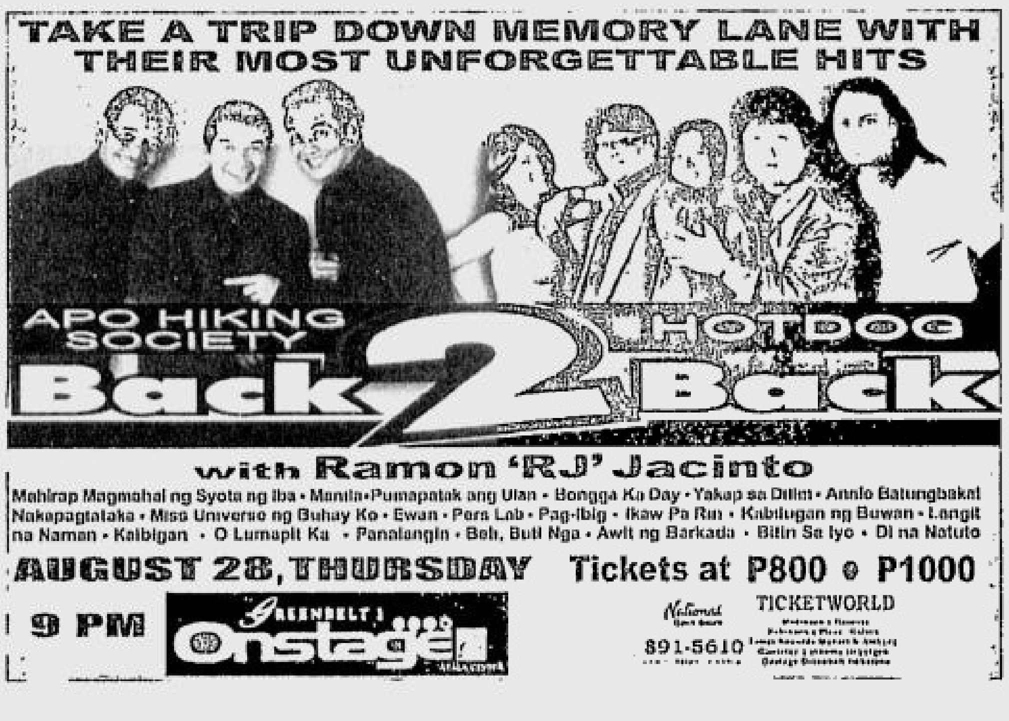
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Star Records set to issue 'corrected' Jamie album

By Marinel R. Cruz

EXECUTIVES of Star Records, which produced Jamie Rivera's "Seasons" album of inspirational songs, have ordered that the album be issued again, this time with the corrected lyrics of one song.

Another record company, BMG Music, earlier claimed that the song had been "altered" in Rivera's album and that the song's legal owners were not acknowledged.

Heinrich Ngo of Star Records marketing division said the alteration of the lyrics of Rivera's version of "My Life is in Your Hands," originally sang by Kathy Troccoli, was merely the result of typographical errors.

"A repackaged 'Seasons' album, which will include the corrected lyrics, will be out in October," Ngo yesterday told Inquirer Entertainment. "It will also contain the corrected names of the composers."

Ngo said the order to repackage "Seasons" came from Star Records vice president for operations Annabelle Regalado and managing director Enrico Santos.

The move was prompted by a letter that

STAR/ A28

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Website: www.inq7money.net
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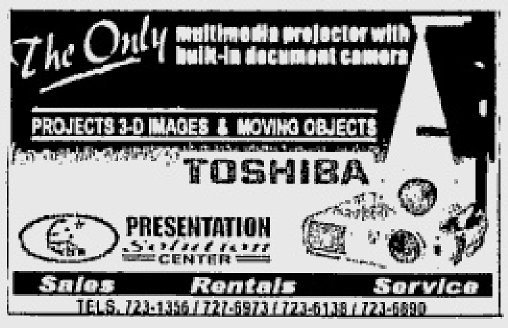
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Manufacturing output down in June

By Doris C. Dumlao

PRODUCTION of the country's top manufacturers slowed down by 1.2 percent in June from a year ago, reversing the 2.6-percent growth in May, as the depreciating peso tempered the appetite to import raw material inputs.

The National Statistics Office yesterday reported that the decline in the June manufacturing volume was largely due to lower production of tobacco, electrical machinery, leather products, fabricated metal products and transport equipment sectors.

Manufacturing accounts for about 70 percent of the country's industrial output and about 25 percent of the entire domestic economy.

Analysts said the manufacturing performance in June reflected the 3.3-percent annual contraction in imports during the same period, which likewise reversed the rebound in May, as producers eased on their inventory build-up due to the depreciation of the peso against the US dollar.

Based on the NSO's report, the average capacity utilization of the top manufacturing sector also fell to 78.4 percent in June from the previous month's 78.5 percent.

The manufacturing data issued by the statistics office yesterday were based on the NSO's monthly integrated survey covering 488 establishments belonging to the top 500 companies listed by the Securities and Exchange Commission. The survey, however, did not factor in the output of the small and medium enterprises, which likewise significantly contribute to domestic production.

AB Capital Securities economist Jose Vistan said the depreciation of the peso starting May 12 caused an increase in the cost of inputs used in manufacturing, thus slowing down production volumes.

"Also, the economies of the United States, Japan and the rest of the world have not shown signs of recovery, thus wiping out the need to increase manufacturing output," Vistan said.

Meanwhile, the country's imports have resumed a positive growth in May after posting the first slowdown seen in 14 months in April. As bulk of the country's exports are heavily dependent on foreign inputs, the import bill is a key indicator of subsequent export performance.

From January to June, the country's export earnings have expanded by only 2.1 percent from a year ago to $17.07 billion as against imports, which increased by 9.9 percent to $18.57 billion.

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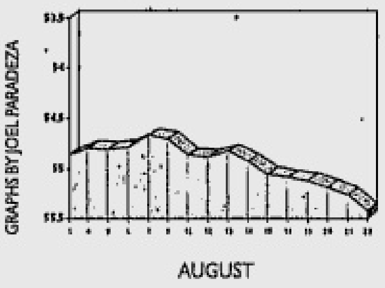

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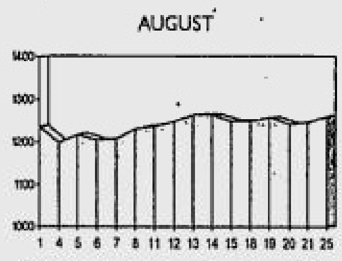
STOCK MARKET

Stocks dip on peso slump



(See stock market report on Page B4)

STOCKS reversed course yesterday, ending more than one percent lower as investors, unsettled by the peso's slide, cashed out of key stocks including banks, traders said.

Further losses were likely in the coming days if currency weakness continued and many leading stocks were now viewed as technically overbought, they said.

The main index ended down 13.25 points, or 1.05 percent, at 1,248.85 points, on thin turnover of P398.05 million against P539.1 million on Monday. In the year to date the index is up 22.63 percent.

The local currency has been badly hit in the past two weeks by security and political jitters, the court-ordered suspension of the central

STOCKS/ B2

NTC to probe 'vanishing' cell phone credits

By Abigail L. Ho

THE DEPARTMENT of Transportation and Communications has ordered the National Telecommunications Commission to again look into complaints that cellular text and call credits quickly "disappear" despite fairly slow usage.

Communications Secretary Leandro Mendoza said in a statement that his office had been receiving complaints from many mobile phone owners that their remaining prepaid balances quickly disappeared, almost immediately after reloading fresh credits into their accounts.

"Many cell phone owners are amazed at how fast their remaining balances are disappearing. The losses are easily discernible to the cell phone owners because of the availability of loads priced less than P100," he said.

He added that he had also been receiving a barrage of complaints about the mobile phone operators' alleged multiple charging of text messages.

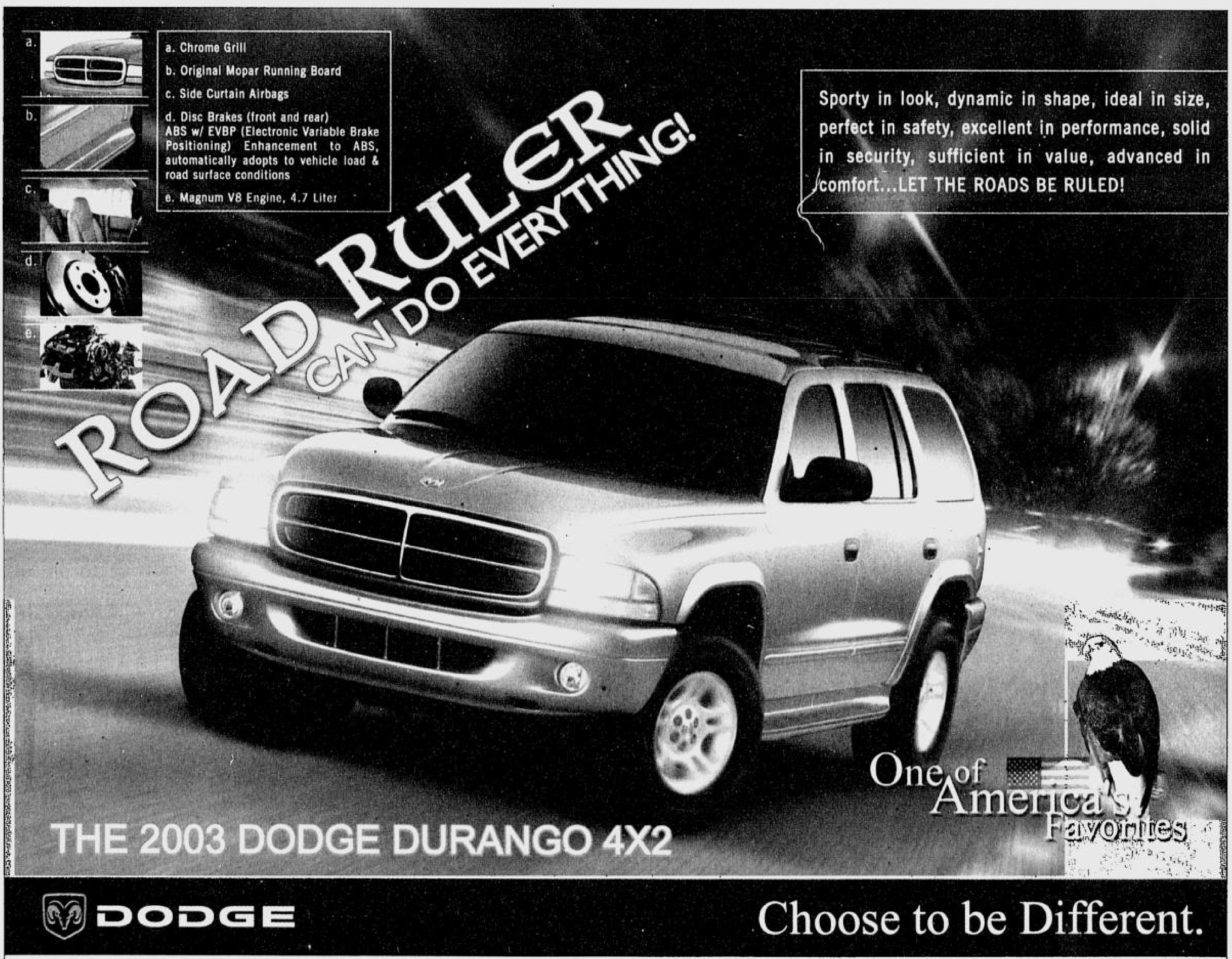
One text message, he explained as derived from the complaints he had received, was sometimes charged twice, thrice or even four times due to multiple sending.

Even if mobile phone users did not send particular messages more than once, he said these sometimes got sent automatically through the cellular service providers' networks.

But leading mobile phone operator Globe Telecom Inc. and Smart Communications Inc. were quick to say that no overcharging or mysterious vanishing credits were taking place within their networks.

Globe assistant vice president

NTC/ B2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Back-pidal

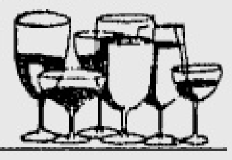
THE TAGAYTAY hotel where Sen. Panfilo Lacson's men had been "securing" their star witness against Jose Miguel Arroyo/Jose Pidal had just been rented only the day before yesterday's rescue, this we got from the hotel owner himself.

Edward Gozum, the general manager of the Milestone Hotel Apartelle, said this was the report he in turn obtained from his Tagaytay personnel after news of the witness' rescue was flashed all over radio and TV yesterday afternoon.

Gozum said the 10-room Milestone hotel by the Tagaytay ridge past the Casino Filipino is a branch of the family-owned, 45-room Milestone Hotel Apartelle on Banawe St., Quezon City.

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin



"I told the staff to cooperate and just tell the truth to the investigators," said Gozum.

Gozum, 30, is a 1991 La Salle Greenhills graduate who returned from Vancouver after college in Canada to help run the family business.

The Tagaytay apartelle rents out rooms for P1,200/day while the Banawe branch has been forced to reduce rates for P900/day because of bad business conditions, he said. The Banawe hotel caters to Chinoy traders who do business with the thriving car parts dealerships in the area.

"I just hope that this incident generates publicity and additional business for the hotel," he said.

Gozum said he does not know or has never met Lacson or Sen. Gregorio Honasan.

Brewing battle

LUCIO Tan's Beer na Beer has quietly exported the competition with San Miguel's Pale Pilsen Beer to Hong Kong.

Beer na Beer one-liter and regular-sized bottles, for example, are being prominently displayed in Park 'n Shop supermarkets alongside Hong Kong and Philippine-brewed San Miguel.

In addition, Stag, another beer in the Beer na Beer stable, is also available in the territory's Wellcome supermarket chain.

Beer na Beer is being retailed for HK$6.20/bottle against San Miguel Pale Pilsen's $7.90. Incidentally, the San Miguel Pale Pilsen being sold in the HK supermarkets is the same Philippine brew in the familiar stout bottle.

Unlike in its home country where it is considered an every man's drink, San Miguel Pale Pilsen is positioned as a premium import in Hong Kong, more expensive than the San Miguel Pale Pilsen that is being bottled also by San Miguel in the territory.

The one-liter Beer na Beer, also an import from the Philippines, is being retailed at HK$12.30/bottle, against the $12.80 for a similar sized, but Hong Kong-bottled San Miguel Beer.

Heard through the grapevine

THE STRATEGY of the Erap-allied opposition is to inflict maximum political and economic instability that would weaken the peso and the stock market, sap investor confidence and create business uncertainty.

These negatives would hopefully preclude GMA, who is enjoying a resurgent popularity, from running and using Malacañang's considerable resources in the 2004 elections.

Cocktales may be reached by e-mail at cocktales_pdi@yahoo.com or at cocktales_pdi@hotmail.com.)

Stocks . . .

From page B1

bank governor and an upsurge in corporate dollar demand.

"Concerns over the peso are growing. There are worries about the possible impact it could have on inflation, the economy as a whole and earnings of companies," said Lawrence de Leon, a trader at Accord Capital Equities.

"The movement of the currency is likely to continue to dictate market sentiment in coming days," he added.

A weak peso, while boosting the earnings of exporters, has a detrimental effect on companies with significant unhedged foreign currency borrowings.

Market talk that the central bank may tighten monetary policy at its board meeting on Thursday also weighed on investor sentiment.

Reuters

NTC to probe. . .

From page B1

for public relations Jones Campos said in a telephone interview yesterday that the Ayala-led firm had already improved its system to enable real-time updating of balances to prevent misconceptions that prepaid credits vanished immediately after loading.

MENDOZA

He related that these sort of complaints stemmed from the non-real-time "decrementation" of call or test usage from a subscriber's remaining prepaid balance.

"This is the same issue on decrementation that has already been raised before. Delayed decrementation is peculiar to prepaid accounts. But we've already improved on our system. Globe's postpaid and prepaid systems now have real-time balance updates," he said.

Globe's other prepaid brand Touch Mobile, which is under its wholly owned subsidiary Innove Communications Inc. (formerly Isla Communications Co. Inc.), also updates balances at least once a day.

As for multiple billings for text messaging, Campos said subscribers with valid complaints could always air their grievances through Globe's customer service group.

They could also submit their complaints to the NTC's one-stop public assistance center.

On the part of Smart, insiders said the cellular giant had not received these kinds of complaints "in a very long time."

The reason for this could be, as explained by Smart public affairs head Ramon Isberto in an earlier interview, Smart's real-time updating of balances since last year.

Mendoza called on cellular phone owners to lodge valid complaints with adequate proof against the mobile phone operators.

"I am not accusing anybody, nor am I immediately absolving any service provider. I am not saying either that all complaints are legitimate. That is why an investigation is in order," he said.

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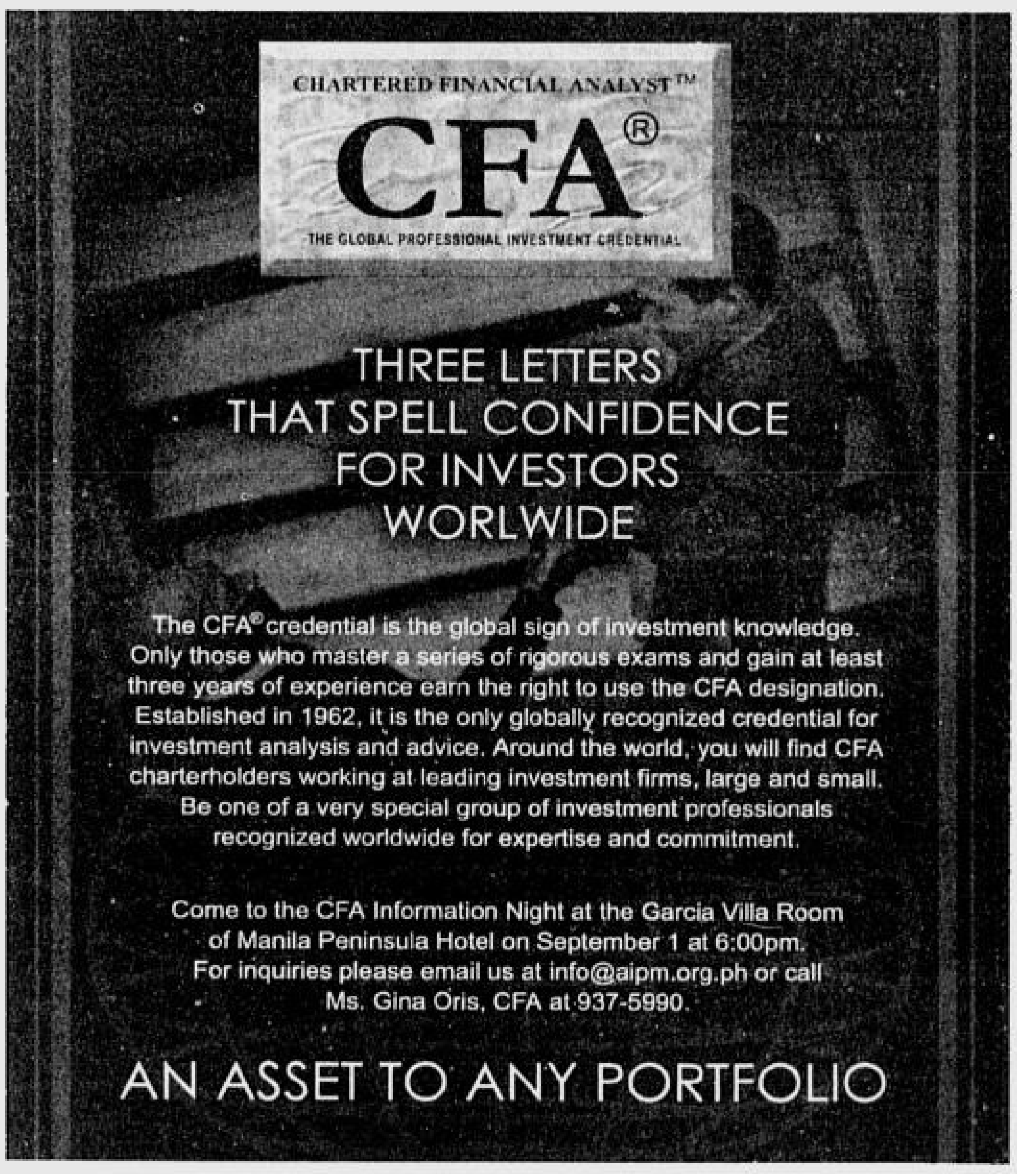

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AN ASSET TO ANY PORTFOLIO

Power Sector Assets & Liabilities Management Corporation

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR RECEIPT OF THE PRELIMINARY INFORMATION MEMORANDUM WITH RESPECT TO THE PRIVATIZATION OF THE GENERATION ASSETS OF THE NATIONAL POWER CORPORATION

The Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation ("*PSALM*") invites interested parties to register their interest in receiving a preliminary information memorandum (the "*Information Memorandum*") on the generation plants (the "*Assets*") of the National Power Corporation which are to be privatized in accordance with Republic Act 9136, otherwise known as the "Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001". PSALM shall provide the Information Memorandum to interested parties who submit a written expression of interest ("*EOI*").

The EOI must contain the full company name, address, telephone and fax numbers, e-mail address and the name of the principal contact of the interested party. The EOI must be submitted at the following address

Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corporation
Attention: Edgardo del Fonso, President and CEO
2nd Floor, SGV II Building Ayala Avenue
Makati City, Philippines 1200

Interested parties shall pay PSALM a non-refundable fee for the Information Memorandum in the amount of Five Hundred U.S. Dollars (US$ 500.00).

This public notice does not constitute a solicitation of bids for any aspect of the privatization of the Assets. It does not start the sale process of any of the Assets, nor does it purport to be a call for such sale process. Invitations to bid for the Assets will be published in due course.

VINCENT S. PEREZ, JR.
Secretary of Energy

Chairman, Privatization Bidding and Awards Committee

August 27, 2003

VISIT...

THE 24TH MANILA INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR
Megatrade Hall, 5th Level, Building B, SM Megamall
EDSA, Mandaluyong City, Metro Manila, Philippines
August 30 - September 7, 2003
10:00 A.M. - 8:00 P.M.

SPECIAL EVENTS SCHEDULE

SATURDAY, AUGUST 30, 2003

10:00 A.M. - 12:00 NN/Function Rm. A
Workshop for Teachers & Parents
Adarna House

10:00 A.M. - 11:30 A.M./Function Rm. B
Seminar/Workshop
"Lamaze Orientation"
Anvil Publishing, Inc.

12:00 NN - 5:00 P.M./Function Rm. B
Game Show
Paalkiaban sa Paaralan
(Teacher's Edition)
Diwa Learning Systems Inc.

1:30 P.M. - 2:30 P.M./Function Rm. A
Book Launching
Adarna House

3:00 P.M. - 5:30 P.M./Function Rm. A
Visine's Read to Lead Road Show
Pfizer Inc.

6:00 P.M. - 8:00 P.M./Function Rm. A
Book Launching
"The Holy Rosary: Heart of the Family (A double VCD on the Holy Rosary), The Word of God and Ang Salita ng Diyos (Liturgical texts, Introductions and Catechesis on the Sunday Readings and Holy Week), Sex? Pag-usapan Natin! (Filipino translation of "Learning to Love", 86 Questions and Answers on Human Sexuality for Teenagers"
Word and Life Publications

6:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M./Function Rm. B
National Book Awards
Manila Critics Circle

SUNDAY, AUGUST 31, 2003

1:00 P.M. - 3:00 P.M./Function Rm. A
Seminar
"Understanding the Book Market: Culling Out Data from the SWS Survey"
National Book Development Board

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 1, 2003

10:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M./Function Rm. A
Forum
"Holistic Approach on Healthy Lifestyle"
Medical & Health Librarians Assn. of the Philippines

10:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M./Function Rm. B
Forum
"Nurturing the Entrepreneurial Spirit in Librarians for their Financial Independence"
Philippine Librarians Association, Inc.

1:30 P.M. - 5:30 P.M./Function Rms. A & B
Seminar
"Filipino Teachers on Becoming A Servant Leader"
Diwa Learning Systems Inc.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, 2003

10:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M./Function Rm. A
Seminar & Workshop/Book Launching
"Shaping the Global Person Through Interactive Learning"
C & E Publishing, Inc.

10:00 A.M. - 12:00 NN/Function Rm. B
Seminar
"Computer-Aided Instruction in the Classroom by Using GLENCOE Technology"
McGraw-Hill Education & IBC Infotech

12:30 P.M. - 3:30 P.M./Function Rm.B
Book Launching
"SRA Literacy Across BEC (Integrating Math, Science & Reading Through Multimedia)"
McGraw-Hill Education & Abiva Publishing House

4:00 P.M. - 6:00 P.M./Function Rm. B
Book Launching
St Pauls

5:30 P.M. - 8:30 P.M./Function Rm. A
Seminar/Workshop
"How To Do Everything With Your Digital Camera"
McGraw-Hill Education

6:30 P.M. - 8:30 P.M./Function Rm. B
St. Michael's Mass by Ryan Cayabyab
Book Wagon

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMER 3, 2003

10:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M./Function Rm. B
Forum
"Lead or Be Led: Change is Inevitable"
Philippine Association of Teachers of Library Science

1:30 P.M. - 4:30 P.M./Function Rm. B
Forum
"Emerging Paradigm: A Vision of Reference Service in a Complex Information Environment"
Philippine Association of Academic and Research Libraries

5:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M./Function Rm. B
Make Mine Music with Joonee Garcia
Book Wagon

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, 2003

10:00 A.M. - 12:00 NN/Function Rm. A
Sa Aklat Sisikat Foundation: Put A Book Into Every Filipino Child's Hands This Christmas
Sa Aklat Sisikat Foundation, Inc.

11:00 A.M. - 12:00 NN/Function Rm. B
Book Launching
"God's Li'l Artists Series (Our Father, Hail Mary, The Creed, Works Of Mercy (Beautiful Little Hearts), Si Mabel at si Angelina), Sa Pagtilaok ng Tandang, Sagot: Mga Pangunahing Katanungan Tungkol sa Pananampalatayang Katoliko, Lord, Heal Me For I Am Sick"
Paulines Publications

12:30 P.M. - 4:30 P.M./Function Rms. A & B
Seminar
"Integrating ICT Into the New Curriculum"
Diwa Learning Systems Inc.

5:00 P.M. - 9:00 P.M./Function Rms. A & B
Booklaunching and Anniversary Celebration
"When Things Go Wrong, The God We Have Forgotten, Finding Your Way, Encouraging Words for Women, Nasaan Ang Diyos Kapag Ako'y Nasasaktan, Arthur's Angry, Ang Batang Ayaw Maligo, Hello God 1 & 2, Mga Kuwento ni Tito Dok: 5 (Ha-ha-hatsinggi), 6 (Kraaak, Nabali ang Buto ni Ferdie!), & 7 (Ngii, ang Kali-kati ng Ulo Ko!), Bible Promises Series, Diamond in the Dust, Leadership Promises Everyday"
OMF Literature, Inc.

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2003

10:00 A.M. - 12:00 NN/Function Rm. A
Forum
"Online Reference Freebies"
UP Library Science Alumni Association

10:00 A.M. - 12:00 NN/Function Rm. B
Forum
"Career Opportunities for Librarians & Information Professionals by Hon. Ramon B. Magsaysay, Jr."
Assn. of Special Libraries of the Phils.

1:30 P.M. - 5:00 P.M./Function Rms. A & B
Game Show
"Paslklaban sa Paaralan"
Diwa Learning Systems, Inc.

5:30 P.M. - 8:30 P.M./Function Rm. B
Book Launching
"Darna, etc., Ang Etika ni Sto. Tomas de Aquino, Angono Rizal - Art Capital ng Pilipinas, Back to the Things Themselves, Clio on Elephant, Kasaysayan Ngayon, 3rd Lira Anthology, Experience Reality, Emerging Theology, The Filipino Physician Today, Fundamental Concepts and Methods in Statistics, Interactive Technical Writing, Mga Kuwentong Maranao, Talinghaga ng Gana, History & Culture, Language and Literature (Selected Essays of Teodoro A. Agoncillo)"
Univ. of Santo Tomas Publishing House

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2003

10:00 A.M. - 3:00 P.M./Function Rms. A & B
Seminar
OMF Literature, Inc.

4:00 P.M. - 7:00 P.M./Function Rm. B
Book Launching
The Jubilee Student Edition Series: "Reconnaissance, Last Order sa Penguin, Onyx, Tinik sa Dila, The Firewalkers, Little Reports, Tilad sa Dilat, A Tropical Winter's Tale & Other Stories" / Other Titles: Mass Communication and Philippine Society, Ang Pag-aaral ng Wika, The Creative Non-Fiction Manual, The Creative Non-Fiction Reader"
University of the Philippines Press

5:30 P.M. - 9:00 P.M./Function Rm. A
Launching
"An Easter People: Our Christian Vocation to be Messengers of Hope, Bishop of Imus, Cavite & Medjas"
Jesuit Communications Foundation & Ateneo de Manila University Press

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Treasury rejects bids for 2-year bonds

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BUREAU of Treasury yesterday rejected anew all offers for the two-year bonds that would have raised the cost of borrowing for that tenor by 73.5 basis points.

Traders justified the higher bids by saying that the market was overwhelmed by political uncertainties that increased the risks of holding Philippine bonds.

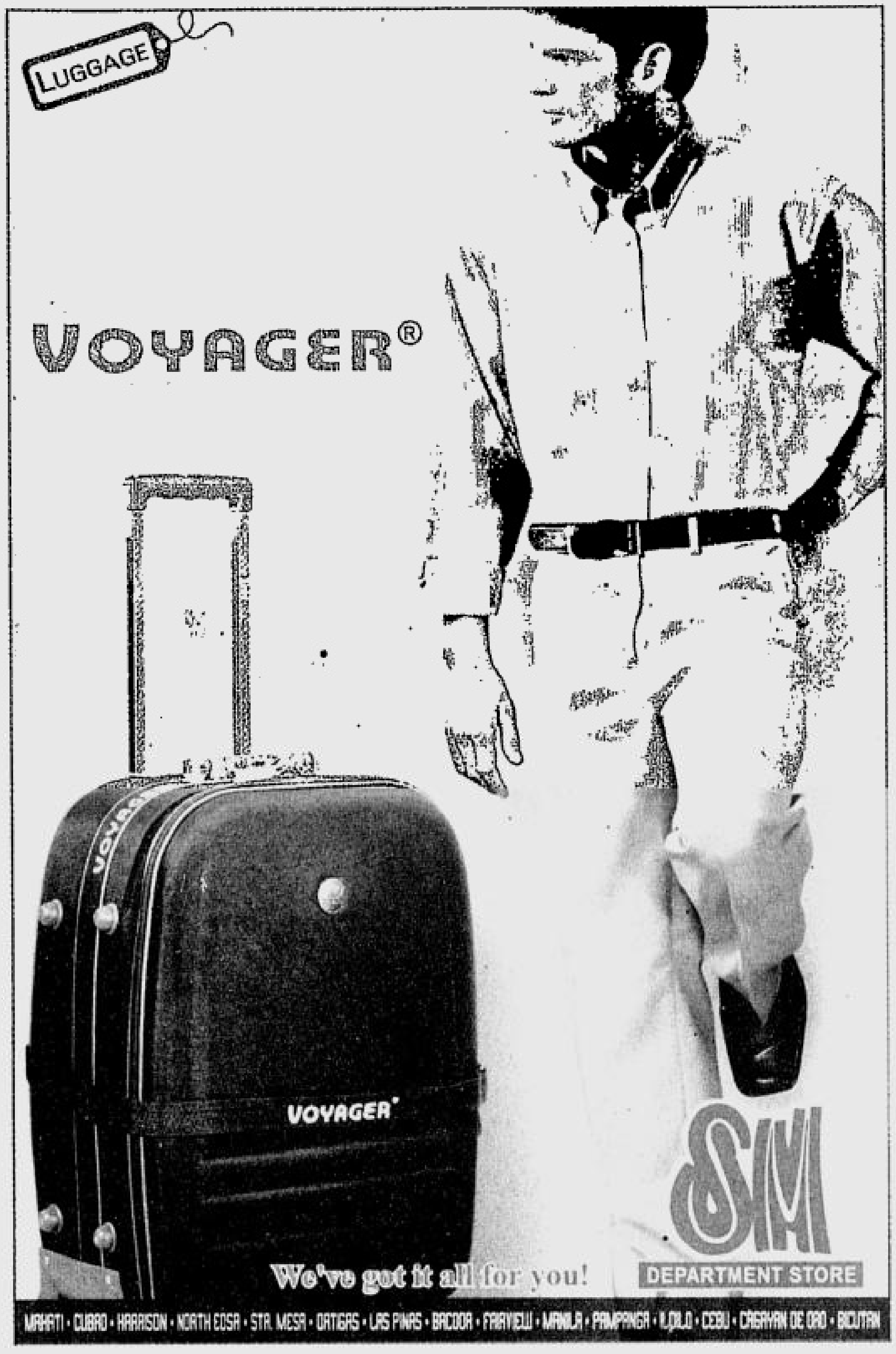
"The government will not borrow at an expensive rate considering that we have a comfortable cash position and we can afford to reject (the bids). We will wait for rates to go down before we borrow again," said Deputy Treasurer Eduardo Mendiola.

Accepting the bids would have raised the coupon rate of the two-year bonds to 9.46 percent from 8.725 percent a month ago. Traders said bonds of a similar tenor were trading at 9.75 percent in the secondary market.

Offers for the two-year bonds reached P4.68 billion against the P3 billion on auction.

Mendiola said none of the bids were acceptable as the lowest offer stood at 9.1 percent. He said the rise in secondary market rates had been abrupt.

Traders said the weak peso was partly the reason why the market tried to bid up the rates.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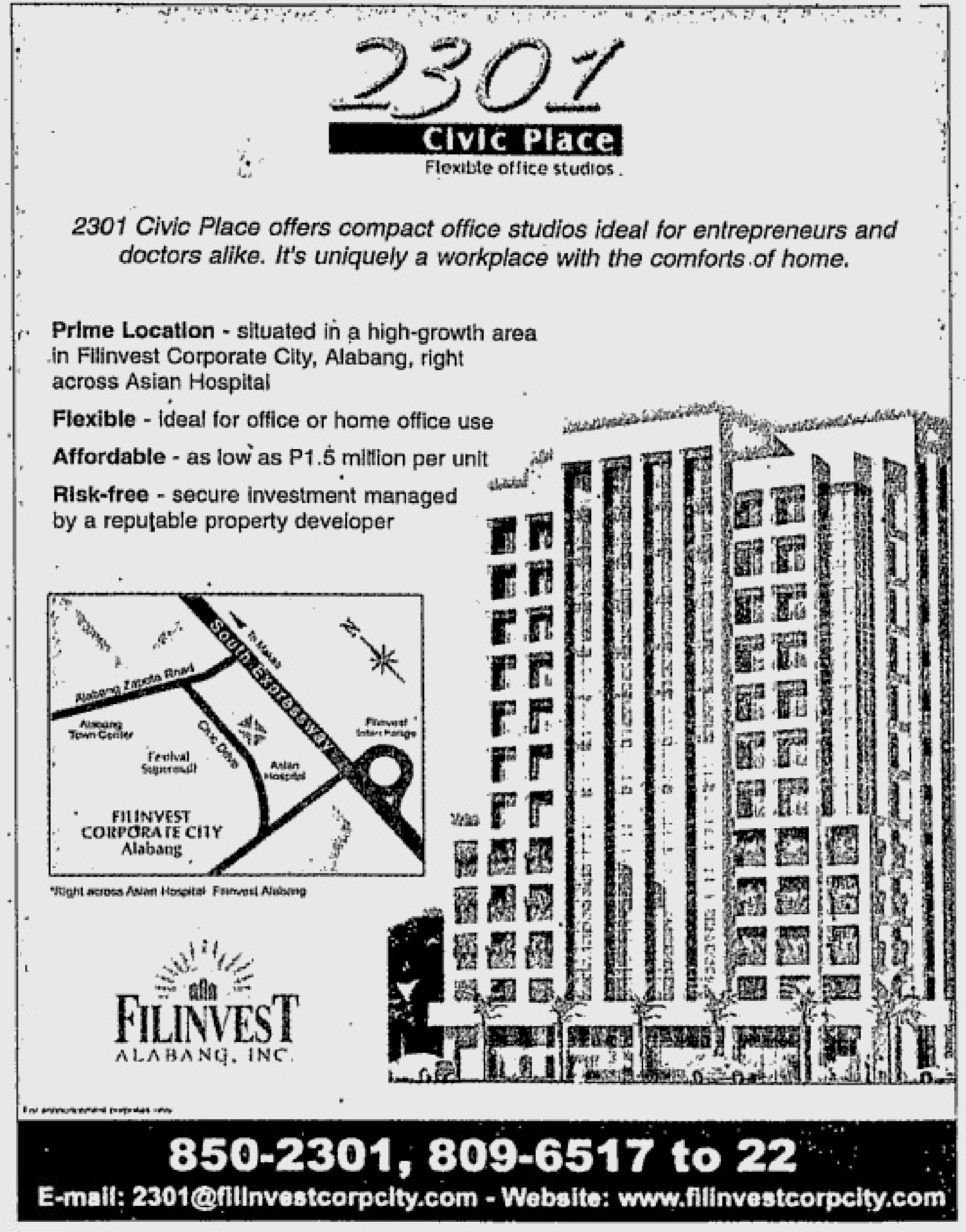
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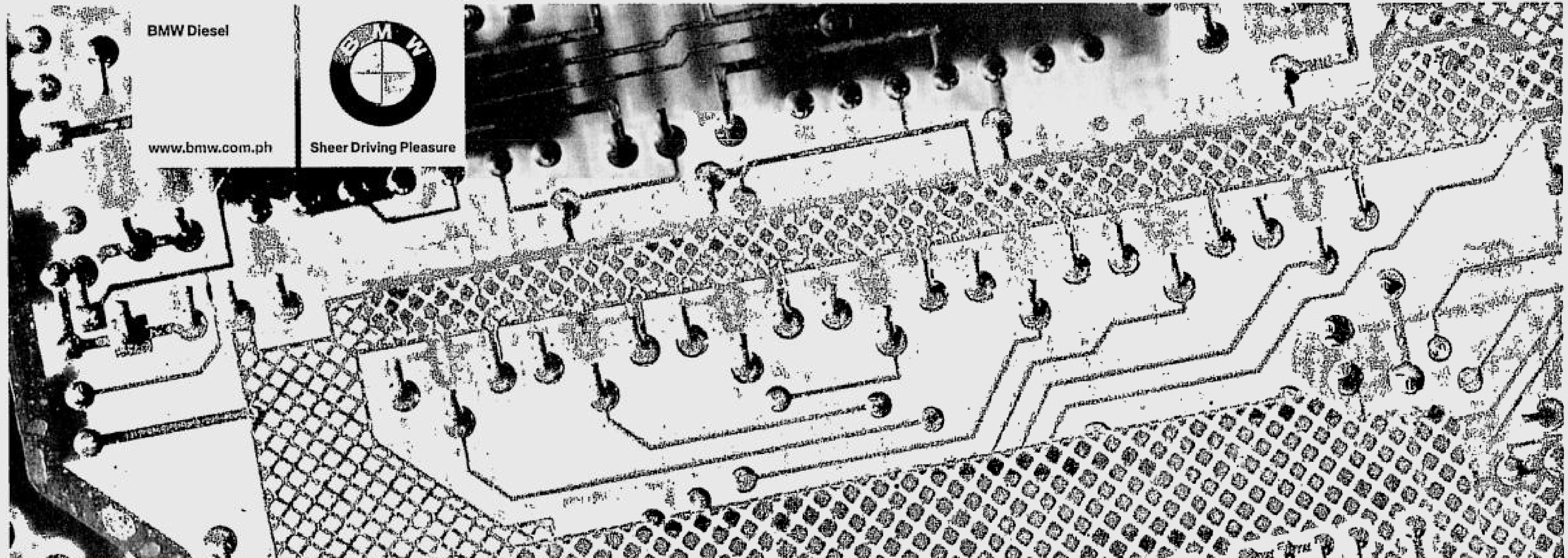
PHILIPPINE AIRLINES, INC.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL STOCKHOLDERS' MEETING

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Stockholders' Meeting of Philippine Airlines, Inc. will be held on 28 August 2003 at the PAL Learning Center, 540 Padre Faura, corner M. Adriatico Streets, Ermita, Manila at 10:00 o' clock in the morning.

For your convenience in registering your attendance, please present some form of identification, such as passport, driver's license, or company ID.

Office of the Corporate Secretary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RCBC raising stake in China Bank

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE YUCHENGCOS' Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. is set to increase its stake in China Banking Corp. to about 17 percent from 8.96 percent through the purchase of additional shares worth at least P640 million.

In a disclosure to the Philippine Stock Exchange yesterday, RCBC said its board of directors had voted to buy additional 1.64 million China Bank shares subject to the approval of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

China Bank's total issued shares stood at about 25.38 million, of which RCBC already owns 8.96 percent.

The estimated value of the 1.64 million shares that RCBC was planning to buy was based on the P640 closing price of China Bank shares at the stock exchange yesterday.

Aside from the stake held by RCBC, the Yuchengcos own at least another 1.3 percent of China Bank through the Malayan Insurance.

The other key shareholders of China Bank are the Dee family, the group of retail tycoon Henry Sy and International Commercial Bank of China.

Sy's SM group owns about 38 percent of China Banking Corp. through SM Investments Corp., Sysmart Inc., Shoemart Inc. and some personal shares held by the retail tycoon himself while ICBC owns 8 percent.

China Bank, which has been in operation for 83 years and maintains a strong niche in the Filipino-Chinese community, boasts of one of the best return-to-equity ratios in the domestic banking industry.

The bank posted a net income of P 1.721 billion for the first six months of this year, a growth of 6 percent from the P1.624 million posted for the same period last year, translating to a return on average equity of 24.34 percent for the period.

China Banking Corp.'s strong performance was largely attributed to improved operational productivity, prudent funds allocation and efficient liquidity management.

Net interest income for the first semester reached P1.762 billion, 18 percent higher than the same period last year. Similarly, fee-based income amounted to P2.854 billion, P591 million higher than last year's level, due mainly to the bank's strategic positioning in low-risk fixed-income securities. In addition, the bank's cost-to-income ratio improved to 37.65 percent.

At the end of six months, the bank's total resources stood at P103.5 billion. Total deposits amounted to P72.8 billion.

BIR slaps higher excise tax on San Mig Light

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue ruled that San Mig Light was a mere variant of the San Miguel Beer line and was, therefore, subject to higher excise taxes.

San Miguel Corp. registered San Mig Light as a new brand in 1999 and, thus, was able to reduce it tax liability to only P9.15 per liter.

The beer brand will now cost P10 more per bottle with the BIR ruling.

"We agreed that San Mig Light is a variant and not a new brand. I think the BIR's legal department supports our decision," said Revenue Commissioner Guillermo Parayno Jr. in an interview yesterday.

The BIR will also issue a revenue regulation soon which will specify the excise taxes to be imposed on liquor brands introduced after 1997. The regulation is waiting for the approval and signature of Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho.

The BIR defines a variant as a brand "on which a modifier is prefixed or suffixed to the root name of the brand which carries the same logo or design of the existing brand."

A BIR official explained that unlike new brands that were given preferential tax treatment to facilitate their entry into the market, a variant should be taxed the highest level because it already benefited from the infrastructure and marketing tools of the original brand.

The BIR said that San Mig Light, like all of its other variants, carried the same coat of arms in its label, differentiating it from new SMC brands like Gold Eagle or Red Horse.

San Mig was an abbreviation of San Miguel Beer, and their labels have the same design connoting affiliation to a specific family of beer.

Given the BIR ruling, San Mig Light should pay the same tax as the San Miguel Premium Can (the highest taxed variant of the San Miguel Beer line) of P19.91 per liter and instead of its current tax of P9.15 per liter.

From a current suggested retail price of P14 a bottle, SMC may have to raise the price of San Mig Light to P24 per bottle once the BIR ruling is implemented.

San Mig Light is SMC's 4th best-selling brand with a 6-percent market share.

The reclassification of San Mig Light is part of the BIR's efforts to address administrative weaknesses that had dampened revenue collection.

It is only now that the BIR conducted a survey on alcoholic beverages and cigarette brands after 1997.

Two weeks ago, the BIR issued a regulation that raised the excise taxes on 18 brands of local and foreign cigarettes.

The BIR regulations were being issued to address the tax leakage caused by the government's failure to conduct a survey on the retail prices of cigarettes and alcoholic beverages three months after they were introduced in the market.

Highlands Prime expects P500M in revenue

PHILIPPINE PORTS AUTHORITY

PORT DISTRICT OFFICE OF VISAYAS

CIP COMPLEX, SERGING OSMEÑA BLVD., NORTH RECLAMATION AREA, CEBU CITY, PHILIPPINES
TEL. NO. (032) 2323401-04, FAX NO. (032) 2321990
E-MAIL: pparo7@cvis.net.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Philippine Ports Authority through the Port District of Visayas invites interested bidders to submit Application to apply for eligibility, and subsequently to bid, if pre-qualified for the:

I.

A.1 Name of Project : REHABILITATION OF FLORES AVENUE DUMAGUETE CITY

B.1 Scope of Work

I	Base Preparation (Volume = 8,576.0 cu.m.)	Major
II	Supply, Spread & Compact 200 mm thick Portland Cement Stabilized Road Mix (Volume = 708.0 cu.m.)	Major
III	Supply & Installation of Geotextile Filler Fabric (non-woven) water separator (12,380.0 sq m.)	Major
IV	Supply & Pour 250 thk item 311 Portland Cement Concrete Pavement (1,975.0 cu.m.)	Major
V	Asphalt Paving (Volume = 376.0 m-ton	Major
VI	Drainage System	Minor

C.1 Minimum Equipment Requirements:

1.0	1 unit	Asphalt Paver (142 hp)	Owned/Leased
2.0	1 unit	Asphalt Kettle (ST)	Owned/Leased
3.0	1 unit	Back Hoe (79 hp)	Owned
4.0	2 units	Bar Cutter	Owned
5.0	1 unit	Bulldozer (300 hp)	Owned
6.0	1 unit	Concrete Cutter	Owned
7.0	2 units	Concrete Vibrator	Owned
8.0	1 unit	Dump Truck (10T)	Owned
9.0	1 unit	Jackhammer w/ Compressor (250 cfm)	Owned
10.0	2 units	Two Bagger concrete Mixer	Owned
11.0	1 unit	Pay Loader (1.0 cu m., 65 hp)	Owned
12.0	1 unit	Pneumatic Roller (80 hp)	Owned/Leased
13.0	1 unit	Road Grader (110 hp)	Owned
14.0	1 unit	Road Roller (Vibratory 10T)	Owned/Leased
15.0	1 unit	Tandem Roller (92 hp)	Owned/Leased
16.0	1 unit	Transit Mixer (5.0 cu.m.)	Owned
17.0	1 unit	Water Tank (5,000 Liters)	Owned

D.1 Budget for the Contract — P 18,419,996.00
Source of Funding — PPA Corporate Fund
Contract Duration — 300 Calendar Days

E.1 Required PCAB Registration & Classification — Medium "B" Road & Highway Pavement

Bid Documents shall be issued only to eligible licensed contractors upon payment of a non-refundable cost of the documents of Ph. 3,000.00

II.

A.2 Name of Project — REHABILITATION OF EXISTING PIER PORT OF LIPATA, CULASI, ANTIQUE

B.2 Scope of Work

I	Casting & Driving RC Pile (0.45m x 0.45m) Length = 2,310.00 ln.m.)	Major
II	Supply/Install Steel Reinforcement for Superstructure (Volume = 45,725 kgs.)	Major
III	Supply/Place 4,000 psi Concrete for Superstructure Incl Formworks (Volume = 319.0 cu.m.)	Major
IV	Supply/Deliver/Install Bollard including acc.	Minor
V	Supply/Deliver/Install Fendering System including accessories	Minor

C.2 Minimum Equipment Requirements :

1.0	1 unit	Bar Bender	Owned
2.0	2 units	Bar Cutter	Owned
3.0	2 units	Two Bagger Concrete Mixer	Owned
4.0	2 units	Concrete vibrator	Owned
5.0	1 unit	Diesel Hammer (3.5T)	Owned/Leased
6.0	1 unit	Drop Hammer (2T)	Owned/Leased
7.0	1 unit	Oxygen-Acetylene Cutting Outfit	Owned
8.0	1 unit	Truckmounted Crane (35T min)	Owned/Leased
9.0	1 unit	Welding Machine (400 amp)	Owned
10.0	1 unit	Boom Truck	Owned

D.2 Budget for the Contract — P 15,307,247.00
Source of Funding — PPA Corporate Fund
Contract Duration — 270 Calendar Days

E.2 Required PCAB Registration & Classification — Medium "B" Port, Harbor & Offshore Engineering

Bid Documents shall be issued only to eligible licensed contractors upon payment of the non-refundable cost of the documents of Ph 3,000.00

F. Experience:

Similar in nature and complexity with at least 50% of the approved budget for the Contract to be bid and 50% of the major items of work.

G. Cost of Pre-qualification or Eligibility Form — P 200.00

Place of Issuance —
Philippine Ports Authority
Port District – Visayas
BAC Secretariat
CIP Complex, North Reclamation Area
Cebu City

H. Last day of Issuance of Pre-C Forms — September 05, 2003

I Deadline of Submission of Accomplished Pre-C/Eligibility Forms — September 12, 2003

Only contractors classified and registered with the Philippine Contractor's Accreditation Board (PCAB) on Contractor's License and Registration Particulars will be issued Eligibility Forms. The Forms are available at the BAC Secretariat, CIP Complex, Serging Osmeña Boulevard, North Reclamation Area, Cebu City. Interested applicants are required to bring a letter of intent and original copy of Contractor's valid PCAB License for verification/authentication purposes.

All particulars relative to the pre-qualification, bidding, evaluation of bids and award of contract shall be governed by the Provisions of E.O. 40.

Further information may be obtained from the following:

BAC Secretariat — Tel. No. (032) 232-3401
PPA Website — www.ppa.com.ph
www.cvis.net.ph/ppa

The Authority reserves the right to reject any and all bids, waive any informality in the proposals received and to accept such bid most advantageous to the Philippines Ports Authority.

(Sgd.) MANUEL T. GORME
Port District Manager

(PDI – August 18 & 27, 2003)

RETAIL tycoon Henry Sy's leisure estate arm Highlands Prime Inc. is expected to generate about P500 million in revenue this year from its maiden residential condominium project, The Woodridge, inside the plush Tagaytay Highlands.

In a statement yesterday, HP president Antonio Henson said that as of end-July, the company had sold more than 50 percent of the available units in The Woodridge valued at P451 million.

HP, which began operations only last year after being spun off from Tagaytay Highlands developer Belle Corp., posted a net revenue of P90 million last year. This resulted in a gross profit of P32 million and a net income of P21 million for 2002.

The Woodridge is a medium-density, stone and timber condominium complex housing 138 residential units of two to three bedrooms.

Henson said the first building would be ready for turnover to the buyers by October this year. The entire project, however, is expected to be completed by 2004.

"The company has in the pipeline new residential projects to be implemented in the next five years in the Tagaytay Highlands area," Henson said.

One of the proposed projects is an affordable but high-quality condominium development in the Tagaytay midlands complex.

Doris C. Dumlao

Franchise group adopts code

WITH the country now considered a mature franchise market, the Philippine Franchise Association (PFA), in its last general membership meeting, adopted a new code of standards for its members.

In a joint statement, PFA chair Samie Lim and president Alegria Bing Limjoco said that the new code, called the Fair Franchising Standards (FFS), "aims to provide a suitable framework for franchise agreements, foster franchising business relations and govern membership in PFA."

A major landmark in the Philippine franchising industry, Lim said that "while a law regulating franchising could be legislated to curb both misguided and unethical franchising practices, such a law could unduly restrict the industry's growth. PFA took the initiative therefore to spearhead self-regulation."

In a span of a few years, the high degree of franchising's success in the Philippines has inspired a great number of entrepreneurs to franchise their businesses. From just around 50 in the early '90s, there are now over 700 franchisees in the country, of which more than 60 percent are foreign.

INTEREST RATES

August 26, 2003-MART1 Rates

Benchmark Interest Rates	MART1 26-Aug-03	MART1 25-Aug-03
1 Month	5.8616	5.8867
3 Months	6.0071	5.93
6 Months	6.4625	6.4411
1 Year	8.0696	8.065
2 Years	9.7267	9.605
3 Years	10.3857	10.1217
4 Years	10.75	10.5017
5 Years	11.0339	10.7817
7 Years	11.65	11.44
10 Years	11.8533	11.7933
20 Years	12.1783	12.1267
25 Years	12.4683	12.4108

SOURCE: MART/BLOOMBERG

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of Aug. 26, 2003)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Banco de Oro Univ. Bank	17.75	17.75	17.75	17.75	41,700
Bank of the Phil. Islands	45	45	44	44.5	74,400
China Banking Corp.	640	640	630	640	12,010
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	34	34	34	34	212,900
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	31	31.5	30.5	31	121,800
Phil. Savings Bank	27	27	27	27	4,200
Security Bank Corp.	19.5	19.75	19.5	19.5	259,800
Union Bank of the Phil.	26	26.5	26	26	229,900
FINANCIAL SERVICES					
Bankard Inc.	1.34	1.34	1.34	1.34	18,000
Manulife Financial Corp.	1620	1620	1620	1620	390
PCI Leasing & Fin. Inc.	1.3	1.34	1.3	1.32	236,000
Sun Life Financial Inc.	1180	1180	1180	1180	650
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	25.5	26	25.5	26	123,500
Digital Telecom Phils Inc.	0.64	0.64	0.63	0.63	3,070,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	640	640	630	630	10,020
Island Info and Tech Inc.	0.0525	0.0525	0.05	0.05	1,500,000
ISM Communications Corp.	0.049	0.0525	0.049	0.0525	5,800,000
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3.05	3.05	3.05	3.05	3,000
Pilipino Tel. Corp.	0.58	0.58	0.57	0.57	500,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	530	535	530	535	198,970
Philweb Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	19,400,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	14	14	13.25	13.25	558,600
Manila Electric Co. B	21.5	21.75	21.25	21.75	723,500
Petron Corp.	2	2.02	1.98	2	1,050,000
Trans-Asia Oil And Energy	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.94	20,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	3.05	3.05	2.95	2.95	2,523,000
Negros Navigation Co.Inc.	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	10,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Union Cement Corp.	0.72	0.72	0.71	0.71	780,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Alaska Milk Corp.	2.95	2.95	2.95	2.95	205,000
Cosmos Bottling Corp.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.5	5,000
Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	29.5	29.5	29	29	33,400
Jollibee Foods Corp.	17	17.25	17	17.25	143,100
Swift Food Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	270,000
San Miguel Corp. A	54.5	55	54	55	50,000
San Miguel Corp. B	64	64	64	64	137,600
Vitarich Corp.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	100,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Ayala Corp.	4.55	4.55	4.5	4.5	896,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	2.6	2.6	2.6	2.6	10,000
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.034	0.034	0.034	0.034	1,500,000
APC Group Inc.	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.07	700,000
Alcorn Gold Res. Corp.	0.008	0.0085	0.008	0.0085	164,000,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	15,000
Baguio Gold Holdings Corp.	0.16	0.16	0.16	0.16	10,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	0.64	0.65	0.58	0.6	38,100,000
Basic Consolidated Inc.	0.12	0.12	0.12	0.12	200,000
Crown Equities Inc.	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	10,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.29	0.29	1,030,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	18.75	18.75	18	18.25	470,100
Global Equities Inc.	0.115	0.13	0.11	0.115	1,440,000
Ionics Inc.	1.42	1.6	1.4	1.44	208,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.82	1.82	1.82	1.82	200,000
Macroasia Corp.	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	30,000
Marsteel Cons. Inc. A	0.016	0.016	0.016	0.016	100,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.89	0.93	0.88	0.9	21,140,000
Mabuhay Holdings Corp.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	50,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.26	0.26	1,000,000
Music Corp.oration	0.39	0.39	0.38	0.38	970,000
Prime Orion Phils. Inc.	0.28	0.28	0.27	0.28	2,050,000
East Asia Power Res. Corp.	0.145	0.15	0.145	0.15	50,000
Roxas Holdings Inc.	1	1	1	1	200,000
Univide Holdings Inc.	0.115	0.115	0.11	0.11	700,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	7,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	13.5	13.5	13.5	13.5	5,300
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICES					
Belle Corp.oration	0.5	0.51	0.5	0.51	5,170,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp. (Pdr)	26	26.5	26	26.5	231,800
OTHERS					
Centro Escolar University	5.2	5.2	5.2	5.2	15,000
Far Eastern University	460	460	460	460	340
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	6.4	6.4	6.4	6.4	5,653,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	90,000
Cityland Development Corp.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	100,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.22	200,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.21	0.21	0.2	0.2	2,500,000
EIB Realty Developers Inc.	0.19	0.25	0.19	0.25	550,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.24	4,260,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	1.04	1.04	1.02	1.02	4,772,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	170,000
City & Land Developers	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	10,000
Robinsons Land Corp.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	110,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	5.8	5.8	5.7	5.7	14,548,000
MINING					
Apex Mining Co. Inc. A	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	10,000
Apex Mining Co. Inc. B	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	70,000
Dizon Copper Silver Mines	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	2,000
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	200,000
Manila Mining Corp. A	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	1,000,000
Omico Corp.	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	0.0032	3,000,000
Polar Mines & Dev't Corp.	0.018	0.018	0.018	0.018	500,000
OIL					
Interport Res. B	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	0.0034	1,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. A	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	10,000,000
Oriental Pet. & Min. B	0.003	0.003	0.003	0.003	13,000,000
The Philodrill Corp. A	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	60,000
The Philodrill Corp. B	0.21	0.21	0.21	0.21	220,000
South China Resources Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	20,000

	SHARES	VALUE(P)
Bank & Fin Svc	1,211,750	35,655,445.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	277,723,230	235,477,320.00
PRO	32,963,000	126,625,740.00
Mining	4,782,000	79,700.00
OIL	24,300,000	137,400.00
GRAND TOTALS :	340,979,980	397,975,605.00
	AVERAGES	
Bank & Fin Svc	448.04	DOWN 5.08
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,792.97	DOWN 18.23
PRO	550.89	DOWN 4.66
Mining	1,272.14	UNCH 0.00
OIL	1.38	DOWN 0.04
SME	100.00	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	781.90	DOWN 8.49
Composite	1,248.85	DOWN 13.25

NO. OF ADVANCES: 11; NO. OF DECLINES: 41; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 40; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 92; NO. OF TRADES: 1,617

DISCLOSURES

ROXAS Holdings Inc. bought 7.5 million of its own shares at P1 per share.

* * *

GLOBE Telecom Inc. disclosed the change in its wholly owned subsidiary's name from **Isla Communications Co. Inc.** to **Innove Communications Inc.**

* * *

ELECTED directors of **Medco Holdings Inc.** were Stephen Riady, John Lee, David Yeh, Vicente Ang, Dionisio Carpio Jr., Caly Ang, Solomon Castro, Say Hing Wong and Edna Reyes.

* * *

ELECTED directors of **Philippine Racing Club Inc.** were Santiago Cua, Tham Ka Hon, Exequiel Robles, Solomon Cua, Santiago Cua Jr., Lawrence Lim Swee Lin, Brigido Dulay, Liberato Robles, Lim Teong Leong, Dato Surin Upatkoon, Joseph Dy, Jesulito Manalo, Ramon Ereneta Jr., Allan Abesamis, Fernando Maramag III, Rodom Fetiza and Rosario Carriaga. The company declared a cash dividend of P0.05 per share in favor of stockholders of record as of Sept. 18 and will be payable on Oct. 10.

* * *

ELECTED directors of **Atok-Big Wedge Co. Inc.** were Ramon Felipe Jr., Jose Sanchez, Rinfredo dela Cruz, Val Antonio Suarez, Mariano Sarmiento II, Vicktor Kalaw, Raul Alvarez, Kenneth Uy and Lucas Pasiliao.

* * *

SPI Technologies Inc. declared a property dividend of 38.39 SPI shares per one eTelecare share in favor of stockholders of record as of Aug. 22.

Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

CURRENCIES

August 26, 2003 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.920387	1.000000	55.364000
Japan	Yen	0.007844	0.008523	0.471900
United Kingdom	Pound	1.446203	1.571300	86.993500
Hongkong	Dollar	0.118017	0.128226	7.099100
Switzerland	Franc	0.649991	0.706215	39.098900
Canada	Dollar	0.657185	0.714031	39.531600
Singapore	Dollar	0.527744	0.573394	31.745400
Australia	Dollar	0.599522	0.651381	36.063100
Bahrain	Dinar*	2.441474	2.652661	146.861900
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.245430	0.266660	14.763400
Brunei	Dollar	0.526236	0.571755	31.654600
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000110	0.000119	0.006600
Thailand	Baht	0.022285	0.024213	1.340500
UAE	Dirham	0.250602	0.272279	15.074500
Euro	Euro	1.000000	1.086500	60.153000
Argentina	Peso	0.314662	0.341880	18.927800
Brazil	Real	0.307821	0.334448	18.516400
Denmark	Kroner	0.134638	0.146284	8.098900
India	Rupee	0.020091	0.021829	1.208500
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.242239	0.263193	14.571400
Mexico	New Peso	0.084633	0.091954	5.090900
New Zealand	Dollar	0.536574	0.582988	32.276500
Norway	Kroner	0.120379	0.130792	7.241200
Pakistan	Rupee	0.015921	0.017298	0.957700
South Africa	Rand	0.123355	0.134025	7.420200
Korea	Won	0.000787	0.000855	0.047300
Sweden	Kroner	0.108021	0.117365	6.497800
Syria	Pound	0.021914	0.023810	1.318200
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.026999	0.029334	1.624000
Venezuela	Bolivar	0.000577	0.000627	0.034700

DTI proposes monitoring of LPG prices

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry said it would propose the inclusion of liquefied petroleum gas in the list of basic goods being monitored by the department in view of the rising demand for and prices of LPG.

Trade and Industry Secretary Manuel Roxas II said he would raise this proposal in tomorrow's meeting of the National Price Coordinating Council (NPCC).

"With the growing dependence on LPG products of millions of Filipino households, it (LPG) should be in the list of prime commodities subject to DTI monitoring," said Roxas in a statement.

At present, LPG is not included in the list of prime commodities subject to DTI monitoring. Under the Consumer Price Act provides that prices of basic goods considered as prime commodities and basic necessities shall be monitored by the DTI, which has the authority to implement price controls during emergency situations and give suggested retail prices.

The DTI is also given the authority to charge retailers and wholesalers of profiteering and overcharging in case they breach commodity price levels imposed by the DTI.

The NPCC meeting tomorrow, said the DTI, was expected to tackle ways of monitoring of LPG prices.

Aside from the proposal to subject LPG to DTI monitoring, the NPCC is also expected to discuss measures to prevent further increases in the prices of basic commodities in the wake of the continued devaluation of the peso and the recent oil price hike.

Roxas said he would also hold a series of meetings with manufacturers, consumer groups and concerned government agencies on the issue of prices.

"The hike in gasoline prices, the peso-dollar fluctuation and the tightening of supply of wheat abroad are issues that should be addressed in relation to price and supplies of basic goods and prime commodities," he said.

Exporters move to gain wider access to China

LOCAL food exporters said they wanted the World Trade Organization (WTO) to force China to ease its restrictions on imports to pave the way for the entry of more Philippine food products into the vast Chinese market.

The Philippine Food Processors and Exporters Organization Inc. (Philfoodex) said it had asked the government to raise the industry's concern to the multilateral trade body. It said exporters were not able to maximize opportunities in China because of the its import restrictions in the form of high tariffs.

Philfoodex president Jesus Tanchangco Sr. said in an interview that the local food industry was expecting to at least double its exports to China only if its import restrictions were not so tight.

"The industry believes that Philippine food products—especially tuna, coconut, durian, dried mangoes, papayas and other fruits—can easily gain patronage in the Chinese market," said Tanchanco.

He said that out of the $1.6 billion worth of the country's export revenue from food products, exports to China only accounted for only 10 percent. This indicates that China remains a huge but untapped market, he added.

"Per capita income in Guangdong province alone is already twice as much as that of the Philippines. But while China is a very attractive market, it is also very difficult to penetrate because of its tariff restrictions," he said.

China's tariff on food products are one of the highest in the region. Its tariff on dried fruits is currently pegged at 100 percent, while the average tariff on tropical fruits is at 40 percent. The figures are significantly lower than that of the Philippines' tariffs on fruits, which range from 3 percent to 15 percent. *Michelle V. Remo*

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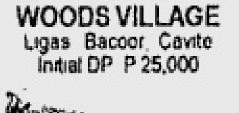

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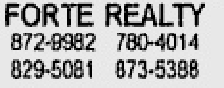

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PASIG

★Ortigas Ctr 2BR UnF 412-1825

QUEZON CITY

3BR 3TB Maids Room with water tank 2car garage 11th Ave. Cubao 9211780

APARTMENT

MANILA

Apt 7841746/6602108

MANDALUYONG

ESTEBAN W/ GRGE U/D 8212091

MARIKINA

2STY 2BR newly painted 9333932 Nila Lucy

PASIG

Apt 2 Sharo 09173023025

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QUEZON CITY

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PHILIPPINE ECONOMIC ZONE AUTHORITY
Special Economic Zone Environment Management Project

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY/APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

1 The Government of the Philippines (GOP), hereinafter called "the Government" through the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) hereinafter called "the Employer", invites interested local and foreign contractors to apply for Eligibility and Prequalification and if prequalified, to bid for the STP Rehabilitation Project of the Special Economic Zone Environment Management Project – Bataan Economic Zone.

2. This is the Third Invitation to Prequalify/Apply for Eligibility and to Bid for the SEZEMP-Bataan STP Rehabilitation Project. Nobody pre-qualified in the first and the second invitation. The Project description is still the same particularly.

Budgetary Project Cost	P120 M
Source of Fund	GOP (PEZA)
Construction Period	365 Calendar Days
Tentative Starting Date	March, 2004

SCOPE OF WORK
- a. Rehabilitation of Existing Sewage Treatment Plant (Rated Capacity 15,500 cm.m./day)
- b. Construction of New Sludge Drying Bed (Approx. 9,000 sq.m.)
- c. Repair of Existing Sludge Pump Room, Admin. and Disinfections Bldg., (Approx. 1,800 sq.m.)
- d. Construction of New Guard House (Approx. 6 sq.m.)
- e. Rehabilitation of Existing Road and Landscaping (Approx. 11,300 sq.m.)

3 The application for pre-qualification is open to bona fide qualified contractor from all countries and areas. Foreign Contractor Applicants should be licensed in their own country/area, or has filed an application for Special License at PCAB, and must satisfy with the requirements of EO 40, i.e. forming themselves into joint venture with local contractor. Local Contractor Applicants must be holding PCAB "AAA" License & Certificate of Registration and Classification of Contractors as Large "B" for Sewerage or Sewage System and/or Water Treatment Plant and System.

4. Contractors forming themselves into a Joint Venture shall comply with the provisions for the procurement of civil works under the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Executive Order No. 40, series of 2001 (EO 40). In case of Joint Venture Applicant, the lead firm and members partner must satisfy the registration and classification requirements in order to meet the jointly and generally liable provision for any and all obligation, which the joint venture may incur. For joint ventures, the lead partner shall meet not less than 40% of the qualifying criteria for similar project experience, with each partners shall meet individually not less than 25% of the qualifying criteria for similar project experience.

5. In view of the size of the project and relative advanced construction and technology required, eligible contractors shall have an adequate expertise and experience in the similar projects. The Applicant must meet the following minimum requirement.
- The value of the prospective bidder's largest single contract, adjusted to current prices completed and similar to the contract to be bid must be at least fifty percent (50%) of the approved budget for the contract to be bid.
- Successful experience in the execution of construction and/or rehabilitation projects of at least three (3) sewerage/water treatment plant/system having a capacity of at least 500 cu.m. per day, or at least one (1) sewerage/water treatment plant system having the capacity of 7,500 cu.m. per day comparable to the proposed project.
- The prospective Applicant's Net Financial Contracting Capacity (NFCC) based on his net working capital must be at least equal to the estimated budget for the contract.

6. Pre-qualification Document may be procured upon submission of the following:

Letter of Intent, Authorization to Purchase Document, certified true copy of the Contractor's License and Certificate of Registration and Classification (for Local Contractor); and license in their own country/area (for Foreign Contractors)

7. Prequalification document will be available for issuance starting September 08, 2003 at the PEZA-SEZEMP Office c/o BAC Secretariat, 3/F Almeda Building, Roxas Blvd. cor. San Luis St., Pasay City, upon payment of non-refundable amount of P3,000.00 The deadline for submission of accomplished Pre-qualification Documents in sealed envelope (1-original & 5-copies) shall be on October 02, 2003, not later than 5:00 PM at the same venue mentioned above.

8. PEZA shall notify the Applicants regarding the results of the Pre-qualification evaluation on or about October 27, 2003. The plans and Bid Documents shall be issued by PEZA not later than October 31, 2003, upon payment by the pre-qualified contractor's of non-refundable amount of P30,000.00

9. The tentative schedule of the Site Inspection and Pre-bid Conference is on November 21 and December 10, 2003, respectively Moreover, the date of bidding shall be on January 06, 2003; wherein the dropping and opening of bids shall be held at same venue as stated above at 10:00 AM

10. All particulars relative to the procurement of the contract shall be governed by the provisions of E.O. 40, series 2001 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations and other applicable rules and regulation.

11. PEZA reserves the right to reject any or all bids, waive any defects contained therein, and accepts the offer most advantageous to the government.

BAC-Chairman
Philippine Economic Zone Authority

(PDI–Aug 27 & Sept. 3, 2003)

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Notice of Loss

Notice is hereby given that the Phil. Equity Fund Certificate No. 00000604 under the name of Richard Benson Kawson Co was reported lost.

(PDI – Aug. 20, 27 & Sept. 3, 2003)

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Customer Care Representatives

Under the direction of the CARE Team Manger, the Customer CARE Representative answers incoming calls, processes the caller's needs consistent with marketing strategies and customer satisfaction measurements to include but not limited to proper branding, cross selling, and processing multiple accounts and products

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Republic of the Philippines
SENATE
Pasay City

INVITATION TO PREQUALIFY AND TO BID

(Administrative Order No. 001, 2. 1988)

The Senate of the Philippines invites all eligible bidders to prequalify and to bid for the following services for Year 2004:

A. PUBLIC BIDDING

1. Canteen Concessioning/Catering
2. HMO
3. Housekeeping
4. Preventive Maintenance of Computers & Peripherals
5. Rental of Copier Machines
6. Rental of Shuttle Bus
7. Subscription to Local/International Newspapers & Magazines
8. Subscription to Local/International Journals & Reviews
9. Supply of Gasoline
10. Senate Secretariat Male Uniform
11. Senate Secretariat Female Uniform
12. Timekeeping System
13. ECG System (PC-base)
14. Defibrilator
15. Printing & binding of RECORD OF THE SENATE (July 24-Oct 2, 2000) and JOURNAL OF THE SENATE (Vol. 1, July 27-Dec. 23, 1998; Vol. II, Jan. 18-June 3, 1999)

B. SEALED BIDDING

1. Cooling Tower Water Treatment Program
2. Garbage Disposal
3. Rental of Drinking Fountains
4. Sanitizers and Deodorizers
5. Subscription to Cable Television
6. Supply of Flowers
7. Preventive Maintenance of 360T York Chillers

Prospective bidders for the **PUBLIC BIDDING** may obtain the prequalification requirements at the PBAC Secretariat Office, Room 401, Senate of the Philippines, GSIS Building, Pasay City from **September 1-5, 2003.** Deadline for the submission of complete and duly accomplished prequalification documents shall be on **September 12, 2003.** ***Incomplete prequalification requirements will not be entertained.*** All applicants shall be notified on the result of the prequalification proceedings. **ONLY PREQUALIFIED BIDDERS SHALL BE ISSUED THE APPROVED SCOPE OF WORKS AND RELATED DOCUMENTS FOR BIDDING.**

All bids under the public bidding category must be accompanied by a bid bond equivalent to five percent (5%) of the total bid price in the form of cash, manager's check, cashier's check, or surety bond. All surety bonds must be callable on demand. **Late bids will be rejected.**

Bidders participating in the **SEALED BIDDING** may secure requirements from the Property and Procurement Services (PPS) located at Room 401, Senate of the Philippines, Pasay City. Schedule of conferences for services under this category, if any, will be announced later including the deadline for the dropping of bids.

The winning bidder(s) for each category shall post a Performance Bond in the form of cash, manager's check, cashier's check, or surety bond equivalent to fifteen percent (15%) of the total contract price. For prepaid contracts, the performance bond shall be equivalent to one hundred percent (100%).

THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS OR ANY PART THEREOF WITHOUT OFFERING ANY REASON, WAIVE ANY DEFECTS CONTAINED THEREIN AND ACCEPT THE OFFER MOST ADVANTAGEOUS TO THE GOVERNMENT, AND THE RIGHT TO CONFISCATE THE BID BOND AND/OR PURSUE APPROPRIATE LEGAL ACTION SHOULD THE WINNING BIDDER REFUSE TO ACCEPT THE AWARD.

FURTHER, THE SENATE OF THE PHILIPPINES ASSUMES NO OBLIGATION WHATSOEVER TO COMPENSATE OR INDEMNIFY THE BIDDER FOR ANY EXPENSE OR LOSS THAT THEY MAY INCUR IN PARTICIPATING IN THIS UNDERTAKING NOR DOES IT GUARANTEE THAT AN AWARD WILL BE MADE.

(Sgd.) **ATTY. ARNEL JOSE S. BAÑAS**
Chairman, Prequalification, Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–Aug. 26, 27 & 28, 2003)

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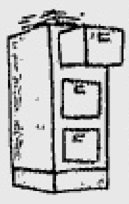

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 27, 2003

OBITUARIES

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DEADLINE
for reservations / cancellations / corrections
Monday to Sunday
12:00 noon
Day before publication

CATALINA "SALING" GUECO SIOPONGCO

(Widow of the late **JOSE "PET" R. SIOPONGCO**)

Passed away in the Grace of our Lord on August 25, 2003 at the age of 85.

Her loving children **LOU** and **OSKIE (†) OCAMPO, CECILE** and **RUDY SIBAL, BOY, MEG** and **TOTI ALEJANDRIA, DITAS** and **HOWARD ROXAS, PINKY** and **MON OPULENCIA**; in-laws, **TICIA L. GUECO, ZENY L. GUECO** and **DOMINGO L. SIOPONGCO; LITA** and **LYDIA**; grandchildren, great granddaughter, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Sta. Maria della Strada Parish, Loyola Heights, Q.C. where a funeral mass will be held on Saturday, August 30, 2003 at 2:00 p.m.

Cremation will follow at the Funeraria Paz Crematorium, G. Araneta Avenue, Q.C.

We, the family of the late

PROF. ALEJANDRINO G. HUFANA

would like to thank you all for your love, support and prayers in our time of bereavement.

In John 3:16, we are assured of his everlasting life. Indeed, to die is to gain. It is with rejoicing that we have released him (a poet, playwright, painter, librarian; moreso, a husband, father, grandfather and brother) to our God for a new life in eternity.

Beloved wife	: Julita Hufana
Loving Children	: Aleta & Ato De Leon, Leni & Patrick del Prado, Zayda, and Sharon & Jun Espejo
Grandchildren	: Daf, Jannie, Gaeo, Timothy, Katrina, Gabe, Silas, AJ, Justin & Paolo
Sister & Brother-in-Law	: Benjamina & Saturnino Galacio
Nephew	: Edmund Ken

CRISANTA S. MONTESCLAROS

Died peacefully on August 25, 2003 at the age of 73.

Her children **Ed** and **Ditas**, **Tata** and **Wilma**, **Atoy** and **Ella**; grandchildren **Louie**, **Chino**, **Inna**, **Anna**, **Caloy**, **Tintin**, **Tantan**, **Marian** & **Marinela**; brother **Felicing** and **Maring**, sister **Nene** and other relatives request the pious readers to pray the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Acacia Chapel, La Funeraria Paz-Sucat (inside Manila Memorial Park) Parañaque City.

Cremation will be at the Manila Memorial Park-Crematorium on Thursday, August 28, 2003 after the 2:00 P.M. Mass.

DR. VICTORIO M. CAGAMPAN

OF SAN CARLOS CITY, PANGASINAN

Peacefully joined his Creator on the 23rd day of August 2003 at the age of 76.

His bereaved wife Catalina; loving children Robert and wife Precy, Edward and wife Theresa, Lyndon and wife Miren; his grandchildren Denzel, Gerard, Patrick, Angelica, Jacob, Pauline; his brother Jose, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at #22 Palaris Street, San Carlos City, Pangasinan.

Interment will be on Sunday, August 31, 2003 at the San Carlos City Cemetery after the 10:30 a.m. Holy Mass at St. Dominic Parish Church.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...

INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS:

❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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Our Dearest Beloved

Virginia Decena Santillan

of Grace Park Kalookan City
Peacefully joined our Lord on August 25, 2003
at the age of 69.

Her loving children **Victorino, Auxiliadora, Ponette, Anacorita** and **Nathaniel**, in-laws, grandchildren, brothers, sisters, nieces, nephews and relatives request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Resurrecion Chapel, Sta. Rita de Cascia Parish South Lawin Avenue, Philam Homes, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Saturday – August 30, 2003 at Loyola Memorial Park Marikina.

"Only goodness and love will pursue me all the days of my life; I will dwell in the house of the Lord for years to come." -- **Psalm 23:6**

MARIA M. ADAJAR

Died peacefully in the Grace of our Lord on August 25, 2003 at the age of 85.

Her loving husband **Delfin, Sr.** (†); children **Rene** (†) & **Violy**, **Oscar** & **Linda**, **Ernie** & **Tita**, **Ramon** & **Emma**, **Mandy** & **Ester**, **Chris** & **Beth**, **Rico** & **Melba**, **Roger** & **Beth**, **Delfin, Jr.** and **Vicky**; grandchildren and great grandchildren request the pious readers to offer prayers for the repose of her soul.

Her body lies in state at the family residence.

Interment will be on Thursday, August 28, 2003 at Alitagtag Batangas Cemetery after the 12 noon Mass.

"Let the words of my mouth meet your Favor, keep the thoughts of my heart before you, Lord, my rock, my redeemer..."

Psalm 21:15

CLASSIFIEDS

Republic of the Philippines
SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION
Makati City

SOCIAL SECURITY SYSTEM,
Petitioner,
- versus - SSC CASE NO. 12-15103-00
UNITED LUMBER & GENERAL
WORKERS OF THE PHILIPPINES
and NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
OF FREE TRADE UNIONS,
Respondents,
x - x

NOTICE OF RESOLUTION

TO THE PRESIDENT/MANAGER
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
FREE TRADE UNIONS

GREETINGS:

Notice is hereby given that on the 30th day of July 2003, a **RESOLUTION**, consisting of 4 pages, was entered in the above-mentioned case, the dispositive portion of which reads as follows:

> **WHEREFORE, PREMISES CONSIDERED**, the Resolution in SSC Case No. 12-13743-91, entitled "Sulpicio T. Basanez, Petitioner, vs. United Lumber and General Workers of the Philippines and National Association of Free Trade Unions, Respondents, and Social Security System, Intervenor", is hereby revived.
>
> Pursuant to Section 22 (c) (2) of the Social Security Act of 1997 (R.A. 8282), let separate Writs of Execution be issued to the Clerks of Court of the Regional Trial Court of Davao City and Butuan City, in their capacity as Ex-Officio Sheriffs, commanding them to levy upon and sell any real and/or personal property, not exempt from execution, of respondents United Lumber and General Workers of the Philippines, located at Room 404, Lawaan Building, Claro M. Recto, Davao City and National Association of Free Trade Unions, represented by its officers, namely: National President, Jaime T. Rincal, Brgy. Libertad, Butuan City; Manuel P. Zamora, Executive vice President, Espiritu St., Mangagoy, Bislig, Surigao del Sur; Leonardo R. Ramoso, Vice President for Organization, Baybay, Brgy. Lunao, Gingoog City; Gavino G. Cuñado, Vice President for Education and Research, Tangkigan, Mabini, Bohol; Alfredo E. Rincal, Vice President for Finance and National Secretary, Lopez Jaena Extension, Butuan City; Efraim A. Martinez, Vice President for Political Affairs, Mahogany, Baan, Butuan City; Juanito Y. Estampa, National Treasurer, Mahogany, Baan, Butuan City; and, Ma. Estrella A. Dime, Auditor, Brgy. Maanas, Medina, Misamis Oriental, or elsewhere, and to garnish the deposits of said respondents in any and all banks where they maintain accounts, sufficient to satisfy their adjudged liability to the SSS as follows:

ULGWP Damages pursuant to Section 24 (a) of the SS Law, as amended		P 8,136.07
NAFTU SS contributions for and in behalf of Sulpicio T. Basanez		P 3,832.50
3% per month penalty computed as of July 31, 2003	—	38,422.55
Damages pursuant to Section 24 (a) of the SS Law, as amended		10,069.45
Total	—	P 50,324.50

> This is without prejudice to the right of the SSS to initiate other appropriate actions against the said respondents.
>
> Corollary to this, the Heads of the SSS Davao City and Butuan City Branch Offices are hereby directed to closely coordinate with the Court's Sheriffs assigned to implement the Writs to ensure their effective implementation and the prompt payment of the proceeds of execution to the SSS.
>
> **SO ORDERED.**

SOCIAL SECURITY COMMISSION

(PDI – August 27, 2003)

Republic of the Philippines
Department of Agrarian Reform
Foreign-Assisted Projects Office
CENTRAL PROJECT OFFICE

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Government of the Philippines, through the Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR), has received an ODA Loan from JAPAN BANK FOR INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION (hereinafter referred to as JBIC) towards the cost of Mindanao Sustainable Settlement Area Development (MINSSAD) Project, and intends to apply a portion of the proceeds of the loan in the total amount of two million and five hundred thousand pesos (PhP 2,500,000.00) to payments under the contract of procurement of equipment:

The DAR, Foreign-Assisted Projects Office (FAPsO), Pre-qualifications, Bids and Award Committee (PBAC) is inviting contractors to pre-qualify and bid for the following equipment under one Lot:

52 units of desktop Personal Computer
2 units of Laptop Computer

JBIC requires that bidders and contractors, as well as the Government of the Philippines-Department of Agrarian Reform, under contracts funded with JBIC ODA Loans and other Japanese ODA, observe the highest standard of ethics during the procurement and execution of such contracts. In pursuance of this policy, JBIC:

1. will reject a proposal for award if it determines that the bidder recommended for award has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent practices in competing for the contract in question;
2. will recognize a contractor as ineligible, for a period determined by JBIC, to be awarded a contract funded with JBIC ODA loans if it at any time determines that the contractor has engaged in corrupt or fraudulent practices in competing for, or in executing, another contract funded with JBIC ODA Loans or other Japanese ODA.

Interested eligible parties are invited to apply for eligibility and to submit sealed bids using Two Envelope System.

- List of eligibility requirements shall be available for issuance on August 28-September 5, 2003.
- Closing date and time for submission of eligibility requirements shall be on September 8, 2003, 5:00 P.M., Manila Time
- Letter of Notice to Prospective Bidders shall be issued on September 15, 2003.
- Bid Documents shall be issued to Pre-Qualified Bidders on September 16-19, 2003, upon presentation of a valid Notification Letter and payment of a non-refundable fee of two thousand pesos (P 2,000).
- Closing Date and Time of submission of bids is September 29, 2003 at 9:00 A.M. Bids shall be opened in the presence of the participating bidders on the same day at 10:00 A.M.

All documents pertaining to the tender are available at DAR-FAPsO, Administrative Unit, 2nd Floor, FAPsO Building, Department of Agrarian Reform, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City.

The DAR reserves the right to reject any or all bids, and accept the offer most advantageous to the Government.

(PDI--Aug. 27 & Sept. 3, 2003)

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Pinoy takes care of multinational company's human resources in Southeast Asia

By Candy G. Villanueva

CAREER TALES

MANY kids grew up munching on Cheez Whiz sandwiches in school, sipping strawberry Kool Aids on lazy summer afternoons, and watching their moms make macaroni salads with Miracle Whip. These Kraft products, which are part of the lives of many families, are produced by a dynamic community of hard workers.

HR team

Few people know though that a dedicated team of human resource professionals are tasked with nurturing this community and uplifting their lives. For example, this team sees to it that Kraft employees are provided with a lot of benefits, from a multi-purpose gym to classes for ballroom dancing and even a concierge to handle the busy moms' utility bills.

Heading this HR team is Nicasio L. Lim, Kraft's Human Resources Director for Southeast Asia. Lim, with his more than twenty years experience in the human resources field, has been instrumental in building a community of dedicated and productive workers and making Kraft Foods, Inc., the company of choice for many job seekers.

Spending four years in a seminary in high school, Lim has always desired to help and serve people. His ambition then was to be a priest. But a "higher force" drew him to the human resources path. While most young people spend years aimlessly looking for a career direction, this young seminarian knew exactly where he was headed.

Moving up

With a Business Administration degree from De La Salle University, Lim's first step into the human resources field was as a job analyst for Republic Flour Mills Corporation in 1977. In the early eighties, he moved to the San Miguel Brewing Group, starting as a job compensation analyst. Finding immense interest in the business, he quickly moved up the ranks and soon became division personnel manager and then, vice president for human resources and communication in San Miguel. His area of responsibility stretched as far as China, Vietnam and Indonesia.

He retired from San Miguel Corporation in 1999. Following a brief one-year hiatus, he joined Kraft Food International in 2000.

Lim strongly believes that business success lies in taking care of a company's most important resource, its employees. He looks at the human resource head as "...the conscience of the company, both protecting the interests of the company's business and the employees as well. In the end, (he) will be able to create a balance which will result in productivity for the growth of the business."

This passionate HR director considers his job as a vocation. "It is my obsession, not only my passion-helping people realize their full potential and growing and nurturing them." Mr. Passion, as some would call him, is also a counselor and friend to the employees. In fact, during the course of his career, he was able to help fix seven broken marriages. "One has to like, love and develop that passion and obsession of not only dealing with people but establishing that heart and general concern for people."

Multinational workforce

Presently, Nic Lim manages all human resources functions of Kraft offices in Thailand, China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei, India, Guam and of course, the Philippines. How does one move multinational workforce? Lim answers, "My principle is to deal with the leadership of the organization because the leaders are responsible. I always see the role of human resources as a facility to the development of leaders. Leadership evolves the kind of environment, the value orientation, the culture that you would like to promote in any organization."

Lim cultivates a good mix of talents in his organization. He does not believe in discrimination, partiality or preference. "We want to be diverse, we do not have preference in terms of sex, age or school," he claims.

Low turnover

While hiring is one of HR's many difficult tasks, Lim believes that the challenge also lies on how you retain and keep your employees. Lim and his efficient team have obviously done a good job at keeping their employees happy because turnover rates at Kraft are very low.

On top of an attractive compensation and benefit package, Lim makes sure employees are given the opportunity to pursue their individual aspirations. "We are pushing a work-life balance at Kraft," says Lim. "In support of that are the various employee programs that we initiate."

Lim proudly relates, "When visitors come to Kraft, one very overwhelming observation is the smiling faces of employees. To me, it is a manifestation of our work environment and culture. It's a deliberate effort that we have cultivated over the years." He adds, "We have created a home for our employees."

NICASIO Lim

Future challenges

With a long list of achievements stacked to his credit, Lim believes there still is a lot of work to be done. While admittedly getting on in years, Lim maintains an active lifestyle commuting from one Asian country to the other, seeking ways to continually improve the welfare of the Kraft employees.

For the future, Lim looks to retiring early and enjoying life with his wife, Benilda, since his children are all grown up.

For HR professionals starting out in their careers, he shares this view on success. "Success comes from sincerity in what you do. When you're obsessed with something, it comes out naturally. Passion keeps you going. It will help you realize your aspirations and will make a difference in touching lives. Success is really a product of the heart."

A perfect job for book lovers

McGraw
BIG
BEST BUY

MARY Kenneth Estrada

PHOTO BY JOHNNY VILLENA

By Cecile G. Garcia

DO you know that one can get paid reading books? This delightful task (at least for bookworms) is part of the work of a book associate. Twenty-seven year old Mary Kenneth Estrada has been one for three years at the Megamall store of Power Books Inc.

Estrada's main duty as a book associate is to assist customers and to attend to inquiries. Others include making sure books are in proper order, checking the special display sale and the warehouse to see if there are new arrivals. She adds, "We also place orders for book replenishment and make an inventory report two to three times a month."

In addition, she has to update customers on special events such as book signings, seminars, lectures and demos. One of her favorite activities is dusting off shelves and arranging books because she gets the chance to acquaint herself with different kinds of books as she browses over them.

Reading required

As part of their job, book associates are required to read. Regularly, they pick up certain titles, read them and them make a synopsis. "We recommend these to customers. We have a special display of titles," comments Estrada. They may also borrow any book of their choice for six days. "Here at Power Books, we work and learn at the same time," she says.

Book associates at Power Books are divided into teams, each team covering different categories of books. They're rotated intermittently in order to familiarize them with every type of book the store carries. Estrada currently belongs to the second team, which is in charge of books on business, history, and travel and leisure. She handles the business category.

Requirements

Love of books is a primary requirement of Mary Kenneth Estrada's job. "Book associates must love books so that they can relate to customers," explains Estrada. Power Books also requires them to be college graduates, preferably with a degree in Communication Arts or Journalism. They must have excellent communication skills and should be able to work under minimum supervision. "Book associates must like dealing with people. They are usually outgoing, extroverts," adds Estrada whose natural ability to adjust to customers and coworkers and to get along with them enhances her qualifications as a book associate.

Estrada previously worked with Power Books International Corp., manufacturers of Skecher Shoes. Born and reared in Madrid, Surigao del Sur (Caraga region), she graduated with honors from Mindanao State University where she took up Public Administration, major in government account. After working briefly with a quasi-government company, she came to Manila in 1999, in search of her dreams and better opportunities.

Exciting work

Estrada recalls that it was a neighbor, also connected with Power Books, who referred her to the specialty bookstore. Says she, "Office work had become too confining. I wanted something more exciting."

And being a book associate certainly is. Meeting people form walks of life-Power Books Megamall has a diverge clientele and is the busiest branch of the popular bookstore-keeps Estrada stimulated, and so does the arrival of new titles.

Estrada started reading at an early age. She says, "I was in grade 1 when I found out that I liked books." Encouraged by her maternal grandmother an elementary school teacher, and an aunt, as a small girl, she preferred to read rather than play. Her love for the printed work led her to explore and discover that she likes inspirational books most of all. She enjoys reading books like "The Alchemist" and "Who Moved My Cheese," and names Scott Peck, Og Mandino and Paolo Coelho as some of her favorite authors. She reads fiction once in a while, but doesn't like biographies.

More than books, however, book associates must face on a day-to-day basis the challenge of encountering every kind of customer. "In fact, our work revolves around this," says Estrada, pointing out that because Power Books is service-oriented, customers are always a priority.

ALL ABOUT WORK

Though they are generally courteous and nice, some customers can be extremely demanding. Estrada discloses, "Some customers can't wait to be attended to. Some try to make you feel ignorant by implying that you don't know a thing about books. It's very important to practice self-control, to be patient. You must not react. You can't afford to be short-tempered. Regardless of how rude or demanding a customer is, you still attend to him. Every time you succeed with a difficult customer, every time you overcome a trying situation, you feel like you've won a battle.

Incentives

Sometimes, certain customers would go as far as complaining to the manager, talking to customer service or sending an email. In this case, the person concerned, the book associate, would have to explain her side.

The upside, of course, is that most customers are satisfied, and some make it a point to express this verbally or through email.

This simple gesture is enough motivation as far as Estrada is concerned. "But, management," she avers, "motivates us in another way. We have quotas per category, per team. If we reach our quota, we are given an incentive."

Estrada, who is single, gives priority to her job. "Right now, it's the most important thing," she says, claiming that doing it well fulfills her in every sense. Would she recommend this job? Yes, she replies-if one possesses the proper temperament, the personality, and naturally, the same insatiable love of books.

How do you find the time to start a new business?

WORKING WOUNDED

Bob Rosner

DEAR WW: I've got a great idea for a business, but I'm stuck with a full-time job that I need to pay my bills. Where do entrepreneurs find the time to start new ventures?

Time Isn't On My Side

If you can spare the time, let me tell you a story. Back in the 70's there was a basketball team called the St. Louis Spirits. The team was scheduled to fly from Louisville to St. Louis when Marvin Barnes, the team's star, glanced at the itinerary. Noting that they were to take off at 8 p.m. and arrive at 7:56 (and having apparently not yet mastered the concept of time zones), Barnes picked up his bag and announced to sportscaster Bob Costas, "I ain't gettin' on no time machine."

Sounds like you're wishing you could get on a time machine in order to start your new business. But since that's impossible you have to be smart about using the time you have. One way to do that is to moonlight—to take those new business baby steps while you're still employed. "Multipreneuring" by Tom Gorman (Fireside Books, 1996) has good tips on how to do that. (And not just for would-be entrepreneurs, either: Gorman's preparing us for a world in which we'll all have multiple careers.) Here are some questions to keep in mind as you moonlight your way to self-employment.

Self-employment

What is your goal in moonlighting? Presumably you've made a business plan for your new venture. What do you need to pull it off? Clients? Contacts? Money? Experience? Choose a moonlighting opportunity that will give you what you need.

Can you get paid to build your new business? Don't assume you have to hang up your shingle immediately. You may be able to start your business on someone else's payroll. Can you take on a part-time job or project work in the field you hope to enter?

Can you balance a new job and your current one? Adrenaline and coffee can only carry you so far. The last thing you want is to overload yourself and start performing poorly at the job that pays the bills. Make sure you've got the stamina to give as much as it takes in both directions. Think of it as good training for the entrepreneurial life.

Conflict of interest

Can you handle a possible conflict of interest with your current employer? Suppose your boss found out you were trying to start a business in the same field you're in now. Would he accuse you of stealing clients? Of using proprietary info? Of trading on the company's reputation? These are all legitimate concerns. To avoid them, I'd suggest broaching the subject with your boss. But Gorman takes a different tack. So your best bet may be to think it through ahead of time and decide what is most comfortable for you.

Based on my email and my personal experience, you're not alone in your dilemma. It's the time that tries men's souls (and women's, too).

(Email him at bob@workingwounded.com.*)*

Climb your career ladder on ...

From page B10

God already has planned a life for us. The Bible says,

"It's in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for. Long before we first heard of Christ and got our hopes up, He had his eye on us, had designs on us for glorious living, part of the overall purpose. He is working out in everything and everyone."

I cannot predict the future. I cannot tell you exactly where you will be successful. But I can advise you on how you can find the answers to your questions:

1. Pray. Pray so that God will grant you enlightenment so that you will know God's will for you. God is committed to your success and so He knows exactly what you should do to succeed. Praying also makes you know yourself more—your strength, your weaknesses and your potentials. By praying, you also get attuned to where God leads you, to people who will help you, workplaces you will fit in, and events that will provide you opportunities for growth. Pray for patience and perseverance.

2. Have patience and perseverance. Patience as related to fortitude is the virtue that adds serenity to the soul in order to control the emotions of discouragement, sadness and irritation. I understand if you are getting to be impatient with yourself and the slow developments in your life with regards to job opportunities and as you wait for the "right break" or what we term as "God's time" when He answers your prayer. Persevere, as it is only through hard work that you can achieve. Timothy Griffith says, "Achievers are not only persistent, they are also hard workers who believe in themselves.

3. Lead a purpose driven life. William James said, "The best use of life is to spend it for something that outlasts it." This is why we must live purpose driven lives.

Last but not least, I'll pray with you this simple prayer: "Lord I ask You to be in charge of my future. I don't want to dream dreams if You are not in them. I don't want to make plans that You will not bless. Therefore, I surrender my past, present and future to You now. Help me not be anxious of my future but to rest in the knowledge that my future is secure with You." (taken from "Trusting God in the Tough Times" by Stormie Omartian). God bless you, Mr. D.

(Send your requests for career advice to rreyes@inquirer.com.ph. *Your letters will be sent to the appropriate CEO columnists who will answer your letters through this column.)*

Discipline and ...

From page B10

even if I am tempted to fritter my energies away barking up the wrong tree (or climbing up the shelves), I would have a clear structure to get me back to the heart of the business.

Many working moms will not admit it, but it is difficult to zero in on our priorities. It is so much easier to get lost in frenzied work. It is even harder to admit that we have become addicted to busyness, that setting our own limits and boundaries is not something we do very often. If you find yourself moving around in the numb state of the over-busy, pull yourself away. If you're fretting over the small things and losing sight of what matters most, pull yourself away again. If you're becoming too tired from work to play with your children, pull yourself away again still another time. Quiet down, figure out what matters most, and get ready for the lift.

(An Mercado-Alcantara is editor-in-chief of Metro Working Mom published by ABS-CBN Publishing. You can write to her at workingmom@pinoycentral.com. *For more work-life balance tips, get a copy of this month's issue with Ai-Ai de las Alas on the cover.)*

PEOPLE at WORK

E-mail: peopleatwork@inquirer.com.ph

Editor **Raul O. Marcelo**
Subsection Editor **Regina Galang Reyes**

Climb your career ladder on four rungs of success

By Cynthia R. Mamon
President & Managing Director; Sun Microsystems Philippines, Inc.

DEAR Ms Mamon,

I'm 33 years old, male. I graduated last November 1991 from a well-known engineering school here in the Philippines with a degree of Bachelor of Science in Industrial Engineering.

With determination, I was able to find a job. After four years, I worked abroad in an electronics company. Then, I worked as an engineer in a Japanese multinational company here. After one and a half years, I decided to resign and applied again abroad. Unfortunately, my application did not materialize, so after one year of waiting, I decided to apply locally and luckily, I was hired again by a Japanese company. But due to the economic slowdown, our company decided to close the operation.

I'm currently working in a medium size company as a quality manager for almost one and a half years. But I got bored, so I decided to take up MBA at Ateneo. However, I'm now experiencing financial difficulty.

I firmly believe that I don't have a future in my present company. I tried applying in other jobs but until now, I still have not received any call for an interview. Do you think I still have a chance to work in another company? Do you think I'm too ambitious? Do you think I have an attitude problem?

I want to work in the IT industry but I only know MS office. Do you think I still have a chance to find a career in the IT industry? I read that your undergraduate is not exactly related to your company right now. Can you give me advice on how I can also do what you did?

Mr. D.

Thank you for reading People at Work. We really hope that many people (like you) will find good advice from all of us who have accepted this opportunity to help. It is very consoling that in our own little way and through this column we are able to reach out to others and share our experiences.

I empathize with you, as you feel quite disappointed that ever since you completed your studies in 1991 and after having been employed in five companies, you are now wondering whether you still have a chance to be employed at all. So that I can hopefully give you good advice, I will reply to your question one by one as follows:

ASK YOUR CEO

"Do you think I still have a chance to work in another company?"

Yes, you have completed B.S. Industrial Engineering, belonging to the top 10% of your graduating class from a well-known engineering school here in the country. You have basic qualifications that should make you employable and this is the reason it wasn't hard for you to have joined the companies that you worked for. Your work experiences from various Japanese multinational companies and as a quality manager of your previous employer should have provided you hands-on experience and added skills that will complement the basic education you completed. Surely you can leverage on the basic strengths that you have-a good education, work experience and obviously your intellectual ability.

"Do you think I am ambitious?"

It is not bad to be ambitious. Having a goal, a purpose, an aspiration in life is necessary for us to know what we want to be, where we want to go and how we achieve our goal in life. One can go as high as he dreams if he works at it, believes in it and sticks to it. To reach a dream, a goal, one must climb a ladder with four rungs, namely determination, dedication, discipline and attitude.

"Do you think I have an attitude problem?"

Employers typically ask prospective applicants why they move from one company to another and this is because they try to assess if indeed the applicant has problems in attitude, personality, behavior and/or has difficulties being a team player. Frankly, because I haven't met you, I cannot judge whether you do have an attitude problem or not. You did say you were beginning to get bored and in the past, there were times when you just decided to resign (for whatever reason). You know yourself more. You can better assess yourself more than others. It will be helpful to review your past employment, how you have performed in the companies you worked for, and the reasons you had decided to leave your past employers. Knowing yourself—your strengths and your weaknesses—is a basic prerequisite in knowing what job will be a good fit for you. John Maxwell says, "You are only an attitude away from success."

"I know only MS office, do you think I still have a chance to find a career in the IT Industry?"

While you are exploring other opportunities, it would be good if you undergo further training so that you can enhance further your knowledge and skills. But the choice of your future training depends on the kind of work you want to be in. Your MBA will surely expand your perspective and give you business management skills that may be useful for you whether you decide to get employed or may explore your entrepreneurial skills.

"Knowing that your undergraduate is not exactly related to your company right now, can you give me advice on how I can also do what you did?"

I cannot advise you to do exactly what I did but let me give you some pointers for discernment. Right now, Dennis, I think you are at the crossroads, and I think it is not merely just choosing a job. I think you are trying to discern what your future will be, your purpose in life and where you are headed for. As I give you advice, I was inspired by a book (given to me us a gift from a friend) by Rick Warren, "The Purpose Driven Life: 'What on Earth Am I Here For?'" Should you have a chance to read this book, I'm sure that you will learn from it much more than what my response in this limited space can offer.

Inspired by this book, I always give advice based on my belief that even before we were born,

CLIMB/B9

CEO mentor Mamon

WORKING MOM

An Mercado Alcantara

Discipline and the tired mom

I'VE MADE A career shift. From doing mostly creative work, I've been bumped up the ladder to do mostly management work. It's a position of greater autonomy and even greater accountability. The move comes at a time when my son is undergoing his own transition—he is moving quickly into the terrible twos. He moves around confidently on his own and makes his likes and dislikes known in no uncertain terms. He too is experiencing greater autonomy and the surprise of accountability.

Limits

We're both testing our limits. While in many instances, I still find myself choosing to stay in the comfort zone, unwilling to wield authority; my son is full swing into his power trip: he flirts, whines, dances, giggles and cuddles up to get his way. I am watching this stage very carefully, aware that the way we respond to him at this stage will tell him what is and is not an acceptable way of making his will known.

Parenting experts remind us that this is a crucial stage and that it is our role as a parent to set the limits for our toddlers. Children need and want to be told how far they can and can't go, say the experts. But when you are a working mom, so tired from work, so drained from proving your worth in the office, frayed from having your ego crushed by corporate limits once too many, the last thing you want to do when you get home is to have a battle of wills with your toddler. Instead, you'll want to give in, abdicate authority to him, because you've already worn authority the whole day.

Battle of wills

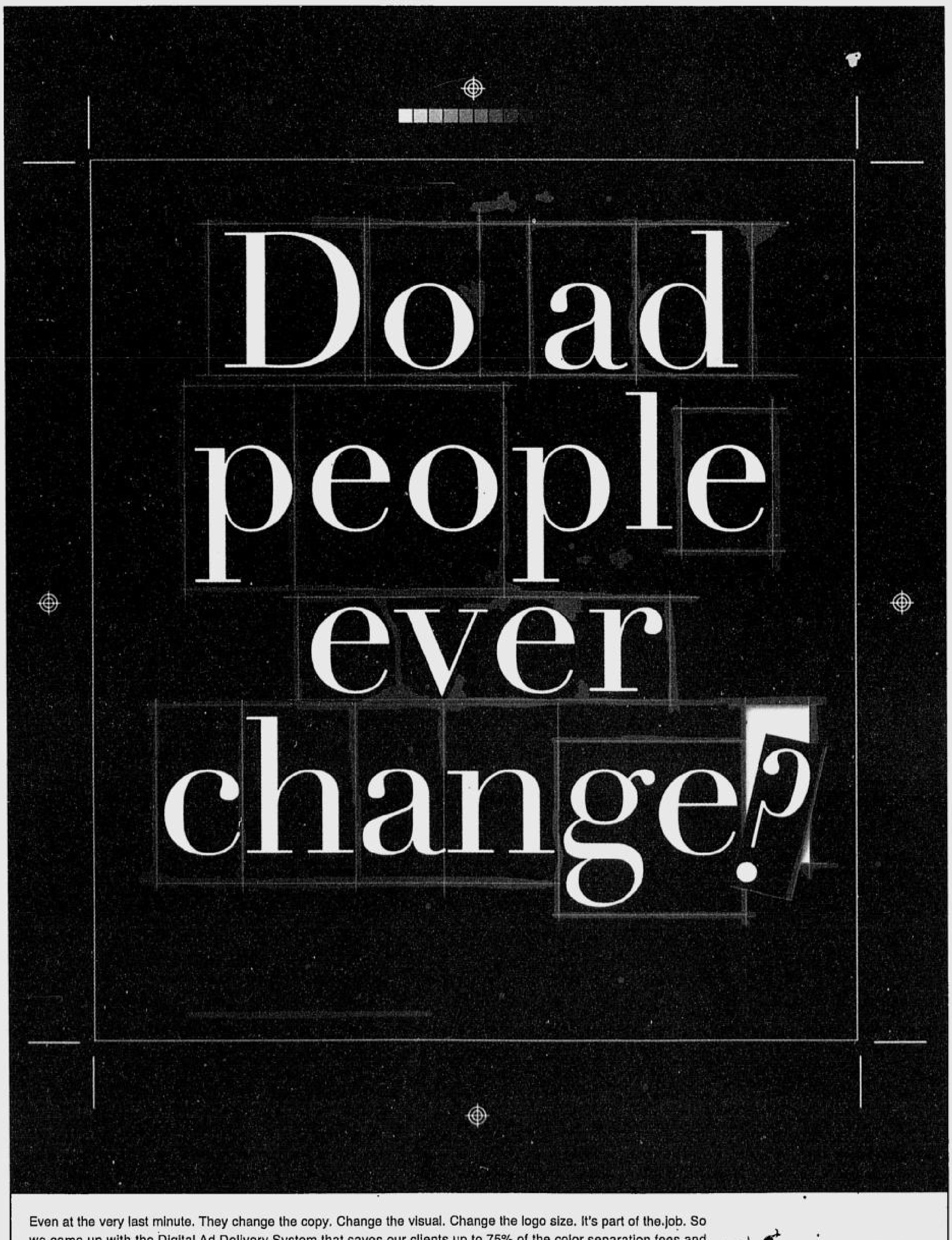
Having just spent such a day at work, and lying exhausted beside my still-awake-child (he had a five hour siesta and was still at full throttle close to midnight), I thought of our last bout of wills. He wanted to climb up the bookshelf; I pulled him away. After a few minutes of the same struggle, I plopped him into his playpen, told him firmly that climbing is not allowed, and endured his crying. Realizing that his crying had no effect on me, and that he didn't want to climb the shelf as much as he wanted to be with me, he quieted down. There were no more attempts at shelf climbing. He understood that this was a firm rule.

I realize now that this game of setting limits and leveling expectations is a game I needed to play, too, in my own work setting. Having found myself a toddler in my new position, I straddled between the many things I suddenly could and wanted to do, as well as the many things other people suddenly expected and wanted me to do.

Priorities

To start on the right foot as an executive, I realized I had to know what matters most in the work setting, as well as my son Diego knew what mattered most in the home setting. I took our corporate objectives, laid them out before me as a road map, and created a weekly battle plan to make sure that

DISCIPLINE/B9



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1	SPY KIDS 3D	SPY KIDS 3D	Artfilm BEST OF CINEMANILA	THX GUARANTEED SEATS SPY KIDS 3D 1:30 3:30 5:30 7:30 9:30 11:30	THX PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN
2	PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN	VIEW FROM THE TOP	BEST OF CINEMANILA	THX GUARANTEED SEATS PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN 3:45 6:20 8:55 11:30	SPY KIDS 3D
3	LXG	THX GUARANTEED SEATS THE ITALIAN JOB 1:10 3:30 5:50 8:10 10:30	APO HIKING SOCIETY & HOTDOG -BACK2BACK Aug. 28 - 9PM	GUARANTEED SEATS FINDING NEMO 1:30 3:45 6:00 8:15 10:30	THE ITALIAN JOB
4	THE ITALIAN JOB	WAKING UP IN RENO		GUARANTEED SEATS TALK TO HER 1:40 4:00 6:20 8:40 11:00	VIEW FROM THE TOP
5		FINDING NEMO		GUARANTEED SEATS THE ITALIAN JOB 2:00 4:20 6:40 9:00 11:20	FINDING NEMO
6		PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN			
7		LXG			

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3 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN
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4 ITALIAN JOB

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8 ITALIAN JOB

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8 BAD BOYS 2
9 NOON AT NGAYON
10 VIEW FROM THE TOP

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8 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN
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10 VIEW FROM THE TOP
11 BAD BOYS 2
12 KEKA

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1 SPY KIDS 3-D
2 LXG
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6 LXG
7 SPY KIDS 3-D
8 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN

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3 SPY KIDS 3-D
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5 VIEW FROM THE TOP
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8 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN
9 ITALIAN JOB
10 BAD BOYS 2

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1 LXG
2 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN
3 FINDING NEMO
4 VIEW FROM THE TOP
5 CONFESSION OF A ...
6 MR. BONES
7 NOON AT NGAYON
8 ITALIAN JOB

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1 SNAKE LADY
2 RESERVED
3 LXG
4 FINDING NEMO
5 IN LAWS
6 VIEW FROM THE TOP
7 RESERVED
8 NOON AT NGAYON

SM CITY PAMPANGA

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1 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN
2 ITALIAN JOB
3 LXG
4 DARK WATER
5 ALEX & EMMA
6 NOON AT NGAYON

SM SUPER CTR. SUCAT

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1 LXG
2 SPY KIDS 3-D
3 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN
4 ITALIAN JOB

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1 SPY KIDS 3-D
2 NOON AT NGAYON
3 KEKA
4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN

SM CITY DAVAO

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1 LXG
2 BANGKOK HAUNTED
3 KEKA
4 NOON AT NGAYON
5 NAKED WEAPON
6 FINDING NEMO

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1 SPY KIDS 3-D
2 LXG
3 ITALIAN JOB
4 PIRATES OF THE CARIBBEAN

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1 FINDING NEMO
2 DUMB & DUMBERER
3 BULLETPROOF MONK
4 VIEW FROM THE TOP

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1 SPY KIDS 3-D
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LFS/11:00 LMF/12:45 END

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6 WAKING UP IN RENO
7 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN

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2 PIRATES OF THE CARRIBEAN
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4 FINDING NEMO
5 ITALIAN JOB
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7 VIEW FROM THE TOP
8 NOON AT NGAYON

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3 VIEW FROM THE TOP
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8 NOON AT NGAYON

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6 NENA INOSENTE

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2 ITALIAN JOB
3 FINDING NEMO
4 THE IN-LAWS
5 LXG

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Perez says gov't will go ahead with privatization of Transco

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE GOVERNMENT said yesterday it was going ahead with its plan to privatize the National Transmission Corp.'s power system, but only if the price was right.

Energy Secretary Vincent Perez Jr., who also chairs the bids and awards committee for the privatization, said in an interview the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp.'s board of directors was scheduled to meet today to decide on whether to declare a second failure of bidding.

"We received only one expression of interest last Friday. Under the procedures set by the Commission on Audit, we need to have a second failure of bidding before we can go into negotiations for a contract," Perez explained.

The first bidding in July was declared a failure as only one company, Singapore Power, expressed interest in the privatization program.

"The direction of the government, as per a meeting of the National Economic and Development Authority executive committee held Tuesday morning, was to push through with the privatization, provided that the price was reasonable," Perez added.

The official was reacting to concerns that Transco's privatization would be at "bargain prices."

Consumers groups have earlier called for the scrapping of the privatization program citing lack of investor interest.

In a statement, the National Association of Electricity Consumers for Reforms (Nasecore) called for the deferment of the transmission system's privatization until "circumstances were ripe for its disposal."

Nasecore lawyer Joe Grapilon said the government has three options: another round of bidding, deferment of privatization or an amendment to the Electric Power Industry Reform Act.

Nasecore said entering into a negotiated contract would violate the law as current rules specified that privatization could only be done through competitive bidding.

But Perez said: "Privatization would push through even through a negotiated contract, assuming that the price would (match) the strategic value of (the transmission system."

Initial government estimates put the value of Transco's assets at about $2.2 billion, but Perez clarified that the present stage of privatization was for the right to operate and maintain the system and not for the ownership of the assets.

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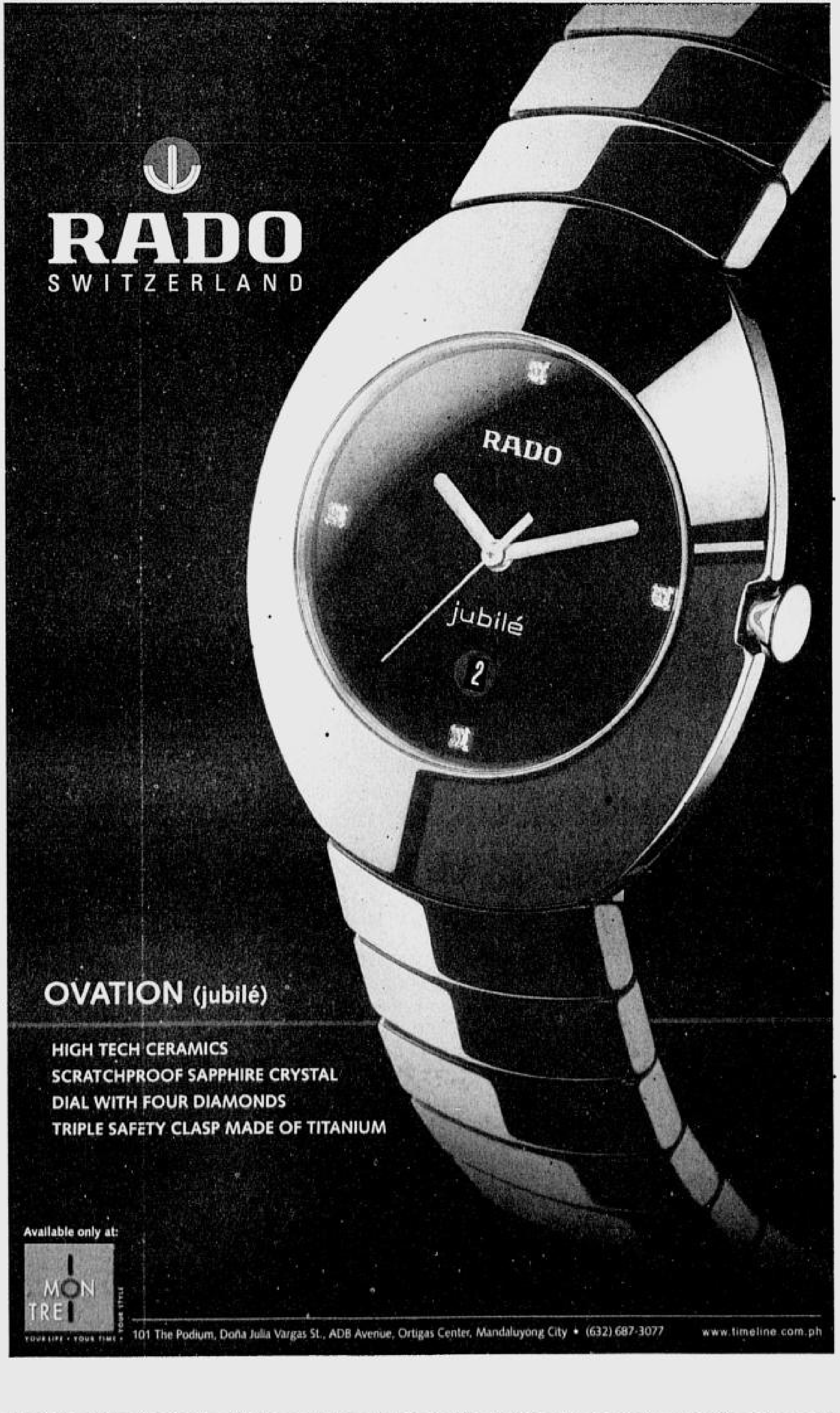

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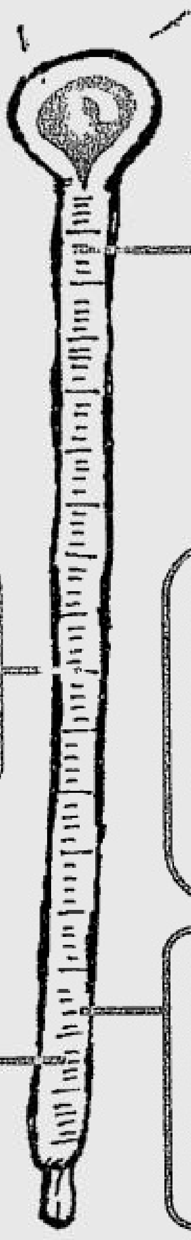
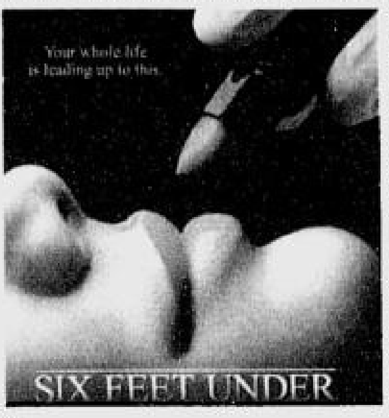


DRIP. Electronica-rock band who lists Baxter, Bjork, Tortoise, Buckley, Joni Mitchell, Hendrix and Massive Attack as their influences. Their EP will be released next month for only P200.

PARENTS know best? Maybe not when it comes to television shows. The Parents Television Council in the United States counted popular television show "CSI: Crime Scene Investigation" as one of the worst TV shows, criticizing it for including cannibalism, S&M sex clubs and snuff films in its content. PTC chose "Touched By an Angel" as the best show. This organization includes "Touched By an Angel," "7th Heaven," "Smallville" and "Star Search" in its list of best shows and "Fear Factor," "Angel," "Will and Grace" and "Friends" in its list of worst shows.



THE NOMINEES for the Emmy Awards have been announced, and HBO's "Six Feet Under" and NBC's "The West Wing" are in the lead with 16 and 15 nominations, respectively. Other nominees include Jennifer Garner ("Alias"), Jennifer Aniston ("Friends"), Sarah Jessica Parker ("Sex and the City"), Matt LeBlanc ("Friends"), Eric McCormack ("Will and Grace"), Ray Romano ("Everybody Loves Raymond"), "CSI," "The Sopranos," "Friends," "Sex and the City," "Will and Grace." We can't wait to see the show.

"LEAGUE of Extraordinary Gentlemen." It's so much better than X-Men.

MORE terrorist attacks. Israel, India, Iraq—when will the attacks stop? Among the casualties of last week's blast at the UN Headquarters in Baghdad was Sergio Vieira de Mello, the UN special representative to Iraq who was originally from Brazil. De Mello has been with the UN since 1969 and has long been an advocate for the rights of refugees from all over the world. Our hearts are broken.

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VIRUS, worms, whatever. We are so sick of having Blaster Worms and Welchia Worms attacking our systems. Everyone, keep your computers protected.

RE-ROUTING of traffic in New Manila. Nothing is permanent except change. But we're still pissed off over the major —and ineffective—change in traffic flow.

F4 TICKETS. You could feed a Third World country with P10,500. Okay fine, maybe we're exaggerating, but really.

HEART Evangelista. First there was Baby Spice. Then Kelly Osbourne. Welcome to the world of "You can't really sing but we'll make you famous so we can rake in money" music industry. Are people even really voting for her song on MYX? Then again, she could have a lot of relatives...

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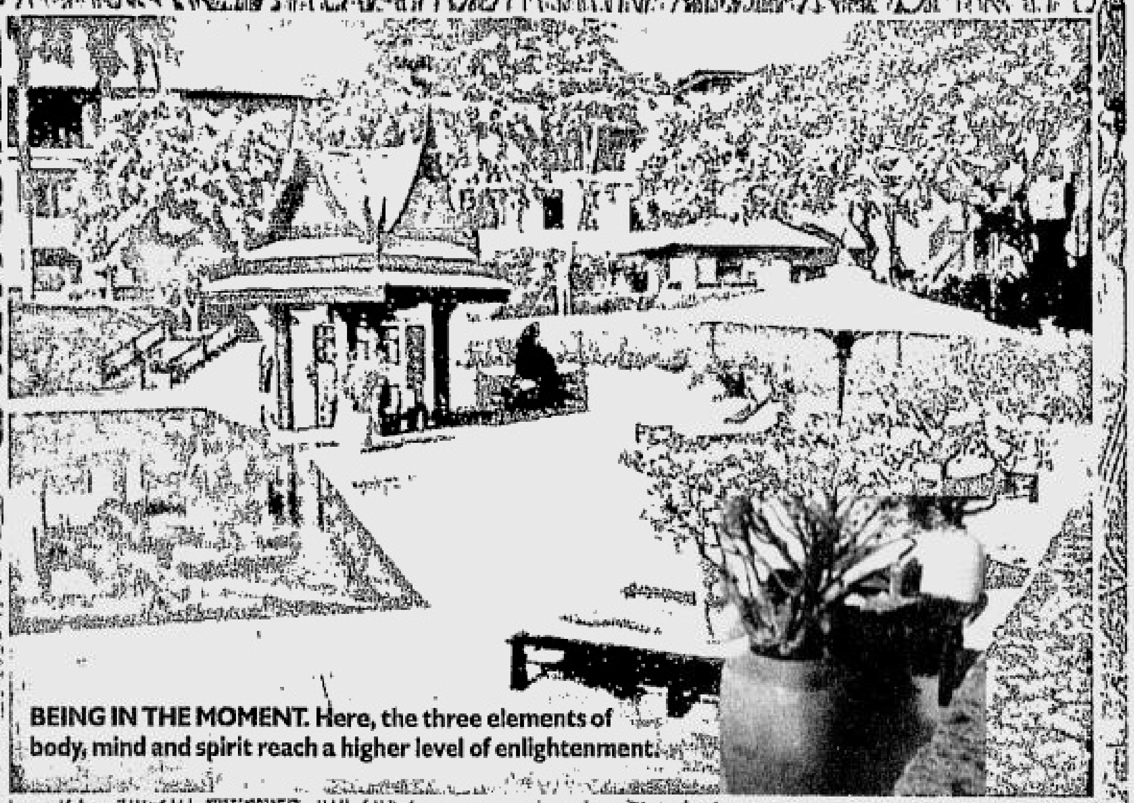
THE HAVEN OF LIFE. Located in the [illegible] those longing for peace away from it...


BEING IN THE MOMENT. Here, the three elements of body, mind and spirit reach a higher level of enlightenment.

A thousand and one spa nights

From page C4

minded rascal), and observe the masseuse at work. Then the next time it is my turn with a "client," I just apply what I've learned.

Lifestyle Asia Spa tour

So when Lifestyle Asia (now under Mega Publications, which is also coming up with the Lifestyle Asia Annual Traveler next year—a la Conde Nast Traveler, if you need a peg) invited me for a "Spa Tour of Thailand, " I grabbed the opportunity to improve my *masahista* skills while at the same time enjoy luxurious pampering in the land of royal orchids, mystical elephants and very happy people.

I arrive in Bangkok in the afternoon without sleep (I did a hosting job the night before). From there, a three-hour or so car ride of checking text messages and running through to-do-lists in my head, we are in Hua Hin, popular with the Thais as a beach destination area. The car then drops me off at the lobby of the famed Chiva Som International Health Resort.

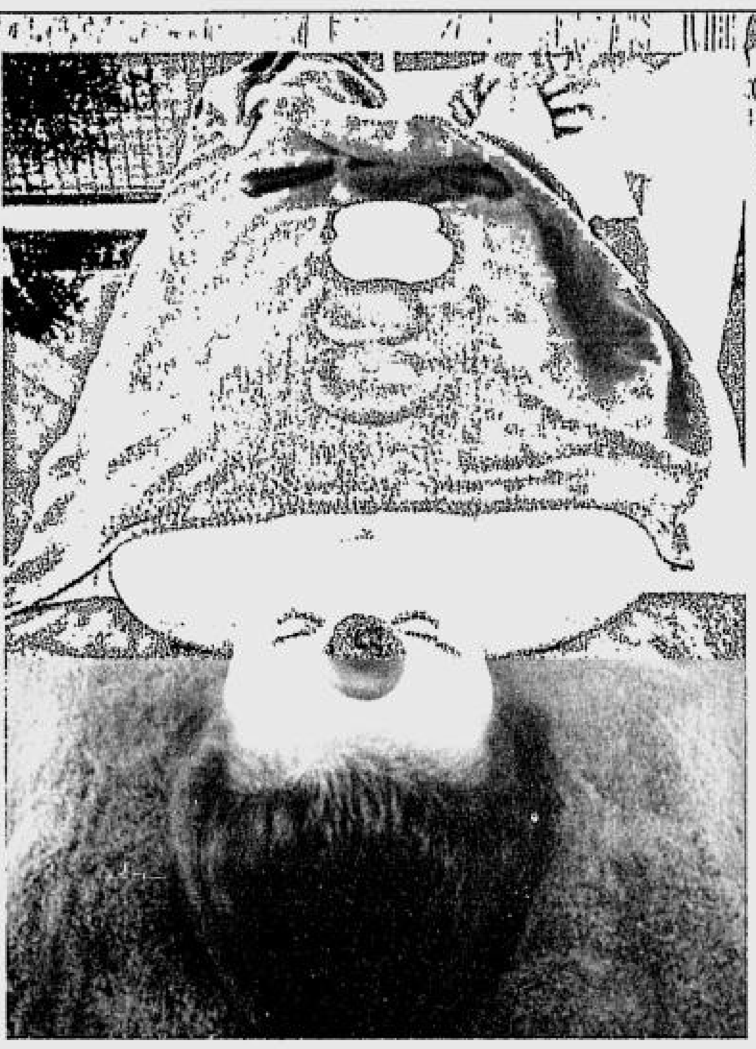
There is a fragrant scent lingering in the air as the receptionist hands me a *sampaguita* garland and a cold towel, and I am filled with a sense of well being and goodness—and that's just the beginning.

I meet with our group, the Lifestyle Asia pack consisting of my surrogate sister **Sari Yap** (now the ed in chief of Lifestyle Asia), associate editor (and Mega VP for marketing) **Joyce Antonio Ramirez**, surrogate mother **Roselle Rebano**, stepdad **Dave de Jesus** of the Tourism Authority of Thailand and my INQUIRER cooking (and later, singing) mate **Vangie Baga-Reyes**, who are all having dinner.

Spa cuisine

I am so excited to see them that wired ol' me start yapping. After five minutes or so, I notice the spa look in their eyes. You know—that really relaxed "good boy/good girl" look, half-awake, half-asleep, still smiling. Either Chiva Som has that effect on them, or I am boring them to death.

HEAVENLY BLISS. Joyce Antonio Ramirez, Lifestyle Asia associate editor and luxury traveler, right before her spa treatments


STONED AGE. After your health and wellness consultation, it's "everyday massage"

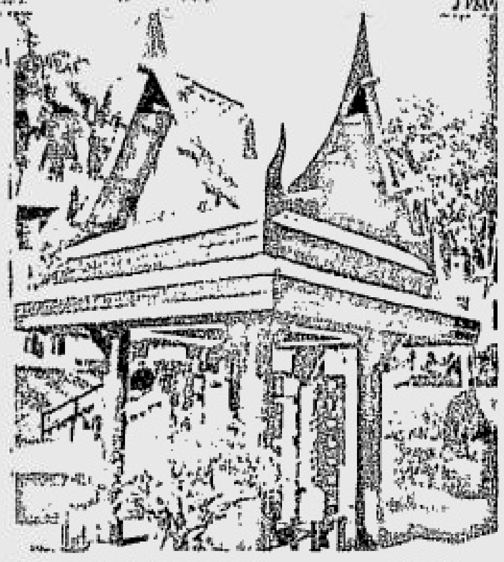
More of the former, I presume, as our group becomes closer to one another as the days go by. (Must be all that massage and well being lectures.) We would bump into each other before our individual spa sessions and then meet up for lunch and dinner, spa cuisine style—everything organic and low-calorie. Everything you consume has a corresponding calorie count on its label (even the chocolate chip cookies in the mini bar). So, while I feast on the refreshingly light meals, the other "rebellious" members of our group would make sure to order those foods with a higher calorie count.

Chiva Som (which means "Haven of Life"), once considered "radical," has inspired a whole generation of Asian spas. It has become the benchmark of holistic health resorts. "Everyday massage" is its mantra. Your day starts with a health and wellness consultation, in which the spa manager gives you advice on which massage to choose. You think that's easy? Not until you see what's on the menu—it's as extensive as how many variations you can do with Sky Flakes. (Remember that ad? Sky Flakes butter, Sky Flakes cheese, Sky Flakes ham, etc...)

I start my day with the nourishing eye treatment, which I follow up with a Chiva Som signature massage. The eye treatment is exactly that—a treat. With my Garfield-droopy eyes caused by forever lack of sleep, I suddenly feel an upswerve of energy and freshness, as if I were Joe de Venecia resurrected as Piolo Pascual.

> After an endless round of pampering and de-stressing in Thailand, you are spic, span—and spanned

AMAZING MAN. Dave de Jesus of the Tourism Authority of Thailand


RELAX, RENEW, LIVE. Pamper and indulge, love yourself

Relax, don't do it

The Chiva Som massage is a combination of various styles, such as Swedish and Thai; it's like a clubhouse sandwich of massages. The masseuse is nice and friendly, touching me in all the right places—totally rubbing off all the toxins (good luck, girl) in my body. Thank Buddha for clean thoughts (you know what happens to guys during massages). I don't have to think of my grandmother dancing naked to calm me down.

The interesting thing about Chiva Som is that it really works hard at enforcing discipline, not just in what you eat. Anything that may cause stress is not allowed. Kids, cell phones and editors (just kidding) are not welcome in the premises (I had to text secretly, in fact). A waiter sees me using my mobile and reprimands me. I realize that true relaxation starts when you leave your phone on silent mode (or turned off).

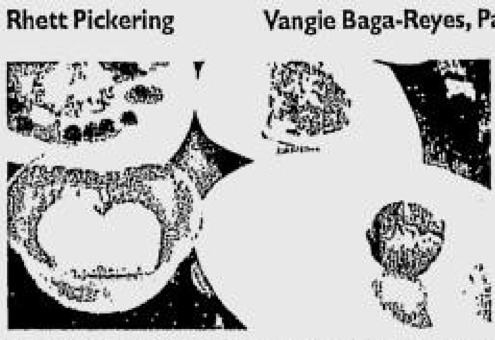
Then again, after all that detox, I need a tox. I get to squeeze in a night out before departing, checking out the Hua Hin night scene of intimate bars and hole-in-the-walls. I also learn that **Posh and Becks** were in Chiva Som just a week ago. Talk about timing.

After two nights, we are ready to go back to the big city. Bangkok—here we come! While in our van, we chat the whole time like happy campers on spring break. Sari and I plan to have a portrait done a la Thai Royal Family (it's a Yap thing) while the bubbly Joyce can't stop talking about her favorite Thai VJ, **Greg Uttsada Panichcul** aka **VJ Utt** (incidentally she is Utt's manager), **Mo Yong**, her Thai psychic and Harry Potter ("Which house are you from? I'm Slytherin.") Okay, I'm from Gryffindor, so let's head for the golden snitch.

To be continued

SPA SENSATION. Rhett Pickering

LIFESTYLE Asia Annual Travelers. Dave de Jesus, Roselle Rebano, Vangie Baga-Reyes, Paul Linder, Sari Yap and Joyce Antonio Ramirez


SPA CUISINE. Organic and low calorie—I like!

ASIA'S FINEST. Chiva Som GM Paul Linder with Sari Yap

PHOTOS: TIM YAP

SARI OF THE SPA. A slimmer and sexier Lifestyle Asia editor in chief Sari Yap at the Devarana Spa at Dusit Thani Hotel in Bangkok

RATED ROMANTIC. Roselle Rebano goes for calm perfection at the Devarana Spa.

MY DAY AT THE SPA. Powder or lotion?

RX 93.1 DJs

RX 93.1 turns 20

By Mark Bonifacio
2bU! Correspondent

The KBP Golden Dove awardee for best FM station has reason to celebrate

IT was a night of fun and spectacular music when Monster Radio RX 93.1 celebrated 20 years of monster hits and broadcasting excellence with an anniversary party dubbed "Decade 2 Decade" at The Forum, The Podium last Aug. 21.

Guests packed The Forum and partied to the music of Moonstar 88, Mojofly, Parokya ni Edgar, Arnee Hidalgo and Stonefree. RX also gave away commemorative CDs as game prizes.

RX executives headed by Chito Barreiro, together with RX DJs like Chico Garcia, Delamar, Boom Gonzales, Fran, Louie D., Danielle, Rico Robles, Chinggay, Jude Rocha, CJ Rodriguez, The Gaucho and its newest recruit Brad Turvey came in full force for the event.

For 20 years, Monster Radio RX 93.1 has been known for its innovative programs, events, talk-of-the town parties and other activities, making it the most creative pop station. RX 93.1 has also been acclaimed as the Best FM Station by the KBP Golden Dove Awards.

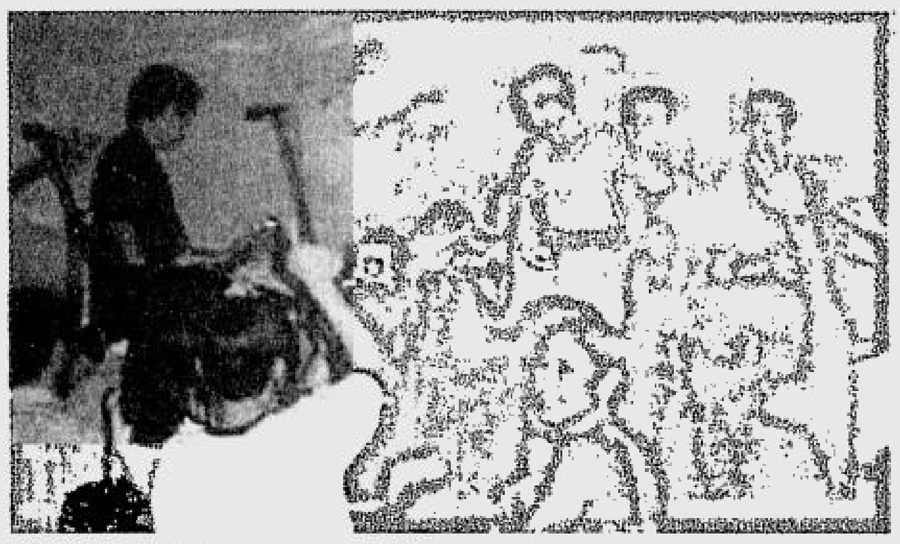
"Decade 2 Decade" served as RX 93.1's way of thanking its avid listeners and sponsors.

"We owe our success to our listeners and sponsors who are always there with us through the years. We wouldn't be here without their support," said program director Louie Dizon.

ARNEE Hidalgo

BRAD Turvey

STONEFREE



PAROKYA ni Edgar

Are macho men turning pink with embarrassment?

By Catherine Young
2bU! Correspondent

"*EH 'di ba* pink is for girls?" a friend exclaimed as we discussed the new public male urinals in Makati.

In case you haven't noticed, the structures in question are bubble-gum-lollipop-cotton-candy-take-me-to-the-prom pink.

And it's not just the urinals. New street signs are also painted pink. If you think about it, it does not seem to be an attempt by the Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) to turn Manila into something straight out of an episode of the "Powerpuff Girls". Nor does it appear to be an effort of the government to prettify things to attract tourists.

Rather, it's probably just the fact that pink objects readily stand out among the usual blues and greens. Pedestrians and drivers cannot ignore the signs that practically scream: "Read me!"

Ultraelectromagnetic pink

So just what is it with pink? It is a combination of red and white with a long wavelength and low frequency. Pink is seen as a soft, feminine hue. It is also used as a wall color for its calming effect on inmates and mentally challenged patients.

A study once put weightlifters to a test. They had to lift a specific weight in a room with red walls, and, after resting, lift the same load in a room with pink walls. The result? The weightlifters were able to lift the heavy load in the red room, but not in the pink one. It appears that pink is a weakening color, which probably makes it a good shade to wear when speaking in front of an audience—it might go easy on you.

Feminine associations

In everyday life, pink is associated with birthday cakes, bunnies, strawberry ice cream and lacy baby dresses. We see it most often in flowers, Easter Eggs, Valentine's Day merchandise and children's toys.

Softer shades usually have a calming effect. Brighter ones stand out.

For newborns, colors do not really matter. Only parents started to make distinctions, associating different colors for girls and boys.

To "grow" into our respective genders, we somehow had to be programmed for it as kids, and colors helped. So pink became the feminine color. In a male-dominated world, it eventually became associated with weakness, subservience and innocence.

Each society has its own associations with color. Our Westernized culture led us to associate feminine qualities with pink from a very young age. American and Japanese tech television programs, such as "The Power Rangers" that generated millions of dollars' worth of toys, videos and movies in the '90s, is an example of how this happens.

Like other series of its kind (remember "Bioman" and "Maskman"?), The "Power Rangers" consisted of five young superheroes with different personalities and were identified by the color of their suits. The one wearing red would always be the strong fearless leader, with the green- or blue-clad hero as second-in-command.

There would usually be two girls in the group, sporting yellow and pink bodysuits. The yellow girl would be the tougher one. And the pink heroine? Well, she was the delicate gymnast or flute player who often had to be rescued by her teammates.

Movie stereotypes

Mainstream cinema is also partly to blame for the color association. Hits spawning unlikely heroines such as Alicia Silverstone's character Cher Horowitz in "Clueless" and Reese Witherspoon's Elle Woods in "Legally Blonde" established stereotypical blonde airheads, who happen to wear a lot of pink.

Media have made pink the "dumb" color, and promoted the notion that macho men do not wear pink. In an episode of the popular "Friends" series, David Schwimmer's character Ross has trouble trying to get his favorite pink shirt back from his ex-girlfriend Mona. But he insists that the shirt is not pink but salmon, a perfectly acceptable color for guys.

Even Eminem, the defiant pop idol whose lyrics involve drugs, sex and misogynistic rape fantasies, cannot get away with pink. The April 2002 issue of Hint Magazine reported that when the Prince of Rap was photographed by Matthias Vriens for the British magazine The Face, Eminem was wearing a red Nike tank top. The shirt was changed to tulip pink, purportedly to avoid a clash with the magazine's cover text, although many claim it was meant to generate more controversy.

On seeing an advance copy of the cover, however, Eminem's label Polydor demanded the magazine abort the depiction of their guy in such an "effeminate shade".

A source close to the star said, "Em hit the roof. He's got this hard man image to live up to and the pictures didn't bring this across." The Face was reportedly paid £100,000 to reprint the issue using the original tank top color, although some copies with the pink shirt made it to UK newsstands.

Color of royalty

But pink actually does not have to be exclusive to women. Pink connotes perfection and health—attributes that all people, men and women alike, wouldn't mind being associated with. Together with purple, pink was in fact designated as the color of royalty because pink fabric was harder to produce in pre-Industrial Revolution times.

E-mail the author at cathy_young1@yahoo.com

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WORLD'S SMALLEST ATTRACTION

A thousand and one spa nights

First of 2 parts

Tim Yap

I've never been into the whole spa thing. It's not that I am never stressed out, but for me, relaxation is all in the mind and the best way to conquer fatigue is to sleep, which I really don't get much of.

I spent my childhood playing masseur to my mother every night. Right before I went to bed, I would hop onto my mom's back, and start rubbing her stress spots while asking her subtly for an allowance increase. Only after she had agreed to all my requests and she was fast asleep would I finally tuck myself into bed.

Early on in life, I learned that I have "healing hands." The people pleaser that I am—my motto is, "I like giving massage than getting it" (no sexual innuendos, please).

And that extended to my adult life. I take pride in being the resident masseur of my circle. At a party's peak, I would give mass massages (well, only to those who want it), complete with herbal treatments and aromatheraphy, mind you—to enhance the relaxed vibe—a great balance between work and play.

So good am I as a masseur that my friends have begun to suspect that it is my "other" job. (Well, sideline *lang*—hey, times are hard.) At the end of the day, I just attribute it to "research and experience." Everytime I get a massage, I stay up (meaning I try not to sleep, you dirty

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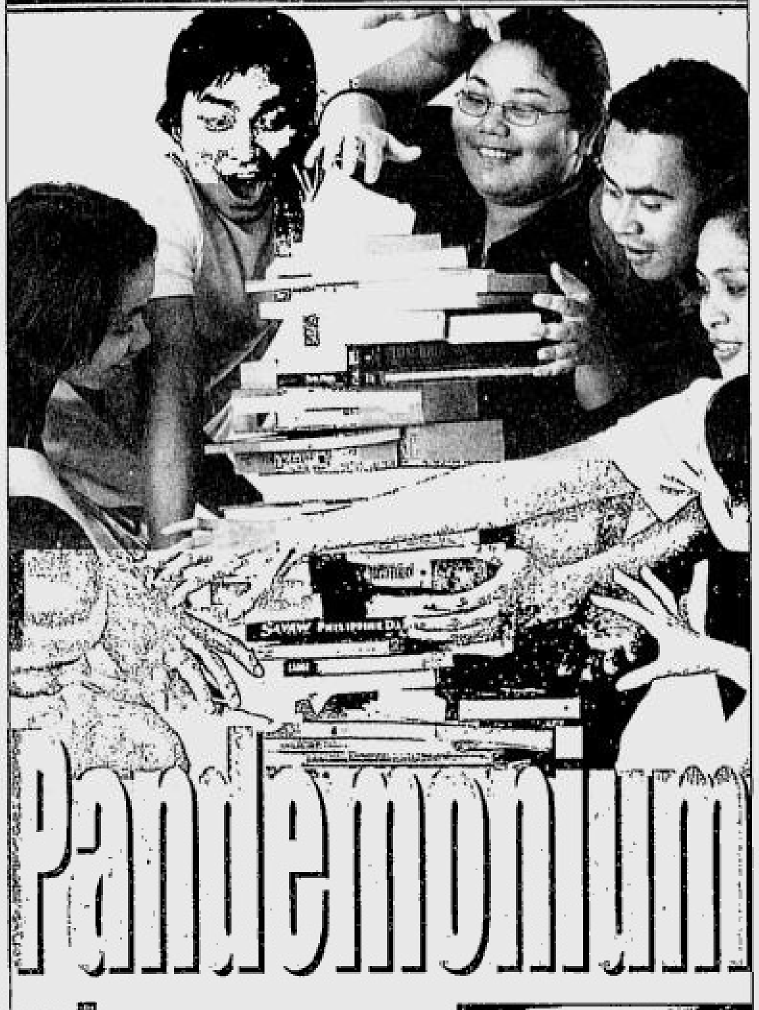

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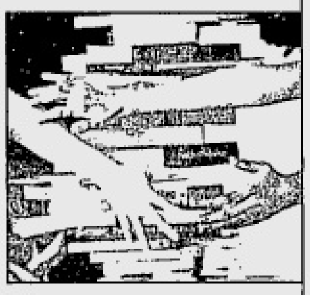

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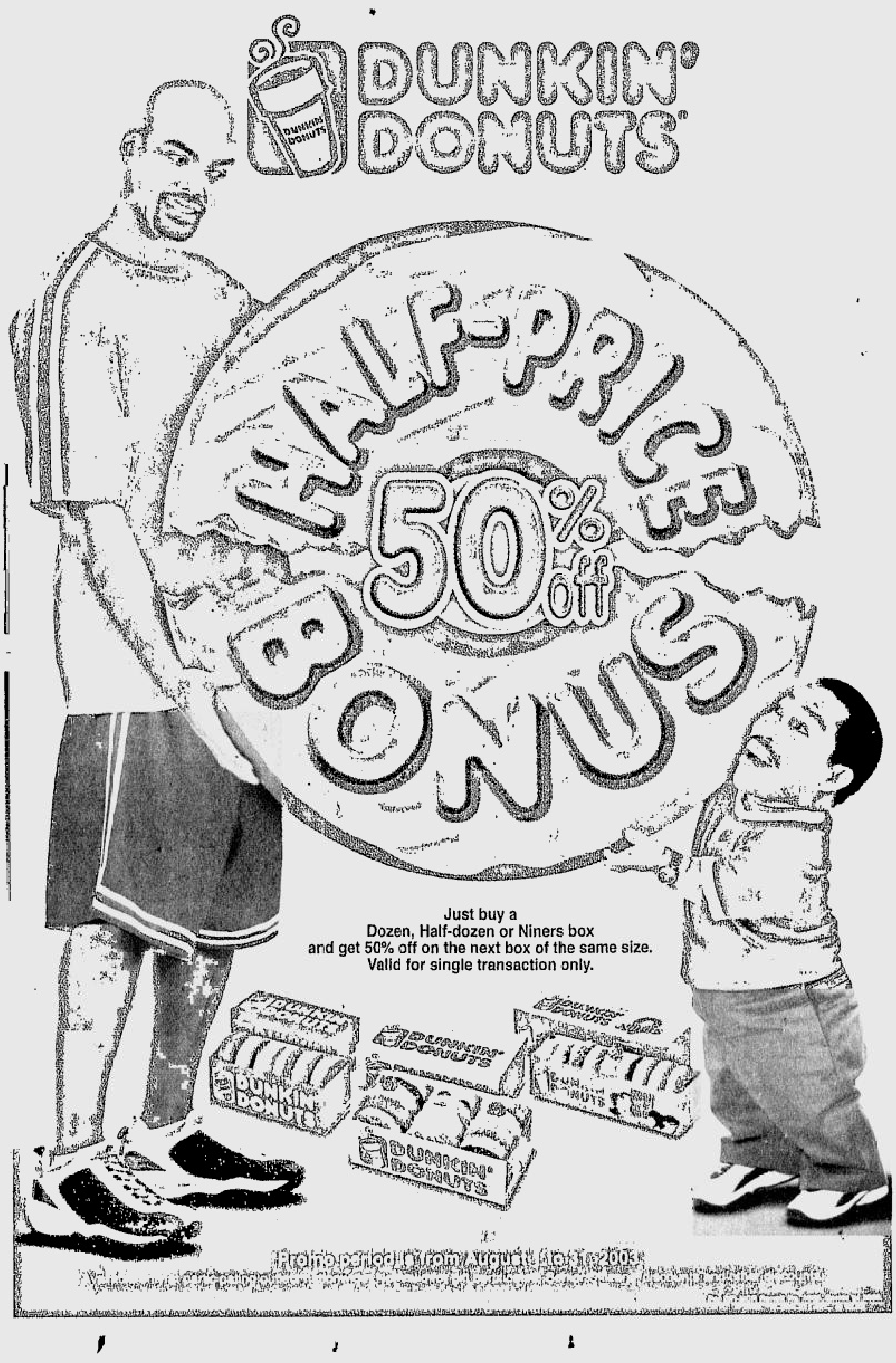

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Face to face with 'Shan Cai'

SUNNY Shan Cai-d up! Catch her in Manila soon.

By Domileo Espejo
Contributor

IT was quite a treat to fly to Taipei with talk show host Pia Guanio for an audience with Shan Cai herself, Barbie Xu, one of the stars of the phenomenally successful "Meteor Garden."

She entered the room without fanfare. A bit thinner in person than on the television screen, Xu was extremely charming, almost enchanting, always with a ready smile.

Already in her mid-20s, Xu exudes the naïve charm of a teenage girl on the verge of adulthood. She understands English and laughed at Guanio's chit chat, but still needed an interpreter during the interview. The *madaldal* actress answered in Chinese.

Xu had flawless complexion, with straight black hair that fell to her waist. She later admitted that the one thing she treasured most was her hair. To maintain her looks, she said she drank lots of fruit juices. No wonder Dao Ming Si fell for her Shan Cai!

But Xu said that although she and her TV persona had some similarities, like bravery and determination, she and Shan Cai differed in the way they dealt with their feelings. "When she (Shan Cai) (had to) choose between Dao Ming Si and Hua Ze Lei, she wasn't resolute. She was always hesitating. I am more sure of myself."

Getting in character

To prepare for a role, Xu said, "Once I get the script, I will start to imagine what kind of girl my character is, what kind of food she likes to eat, what kind of relationship she has with her family, what her horoscope and blood type are, and what kind of experiences she had as a child. I would imagine all this and edit her personal background to suit my needs."

She had to face tremendous difficulties and constant exhaustion, prompting her to declare at one point that she wouldn't act again. The success of "Meteor Garden" showed that thousands of people liked her work, giving her a strong sense of accomplishment. "This happens with all my projects and it sustains my interest in acting," she said.

Aside from acting, the versatile performer is also popular in Taiwan and other parts of Asia as a singer and TV host. Xu is known as Da S in ASOS, a singing duo with her sister. And she has been hosting a daily musical variety show in Taiwan, "100% Entertainment," for the last five years.

When asked about her male co-stars, Xu admitted her first reaction when she saw F4 was: "Wow!"

"I could only ogle at them. I guess my eyes were as big as saucers!" she added.

But after working with them everyday, she found that their personalities clicked. "I think Jerry (Yan) is a sensitive person." Barbie said he had a "purity" that stemmed from his love of children. "Every time he sees children, he transforms into somebody else."

Vaness Wu, on the other hand, is the vain one. "He's very narcissistic because he's always looking in the mirror. And we would swap beauty tips like how to take care of the hair and the skin. He's the only one among the four guys who would talk to me about these things."

But Xu admired him for his talent. "He loves to sing and dance and he can't seem to stop."

Best pals

Among the four, she is closest to Vic Zhou. They treat each other like *kinakapatid*. Zhou, according to the actress, has a great sense of humor. They would always joke around on the set. But surprisingly, she said his dream was to become a farmer and till his own land in a part of Taiwan called Yi Lan.

The actors try to keep in touch despite their hectic schedules, sending each other text messages once in a while. With *ka-berks* like the F4 guys, one would think that Xu's love life would be a party. But she admitted she already found "the one"—also in "Meteor Garden," but not from F4. Xu is with Lan Jeng Long, the actor who played Qing Yong, Dao's cousin in the show.

It might surprise people to know that the actress likes buying cookbooks, learning new dishes, and visiting bookstores with friends. She loves to read and also enjoys yoga. "The only outdoor thing I like doing is watching movies. I love movies."

She likes staying at home, cooking meals for her boy friend and setting up their romantic dates. Like many women, her biggest dream is to find a good man, get married and have his children. "I describe myself as the 'good housewife' type... Work is just an interesting hobby for me... I think that being a wife and being a mother are more interesting."

METEOR trio: Pia Guanio, Barbie Xu and the author Domi Espejo

Barbie Xu says she has little in common with her 'Meteor Garden' alter ego

But right now, Xu is on a roll. Next up is "A Chinese Ghost Story," another chinovela, this time set in ancient China. She will be donning a "Crouching Tiger"-ish costume to play Xiao Qian, who is out to bewitch humans. "Her character is even more naïve than Shan Cai's. She has no care and no worries, and her lifelong wish is to find true love." The show will be aired on ABS-CBN soon.

She said she felt really blessed that Filipino audiences have come to know her, and Shan Cai.

As she said goodbye, Xu expressed the wish to visit the Philippines soon.

onstage 2nyt

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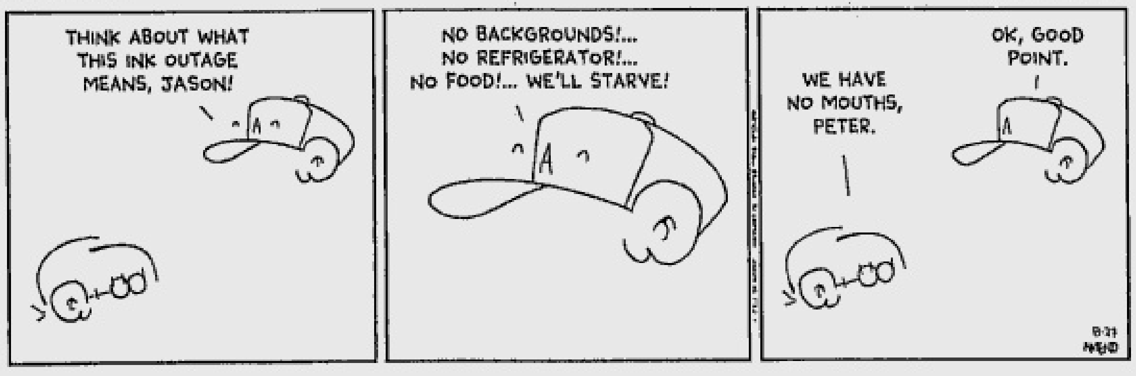
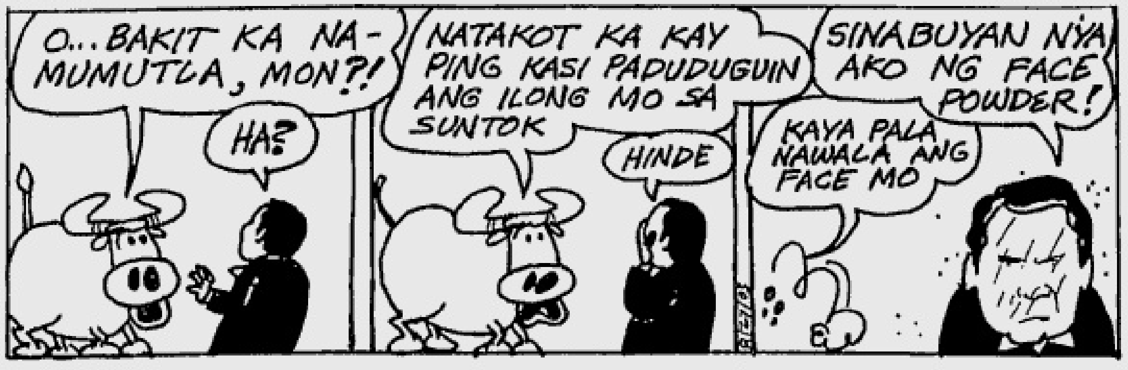
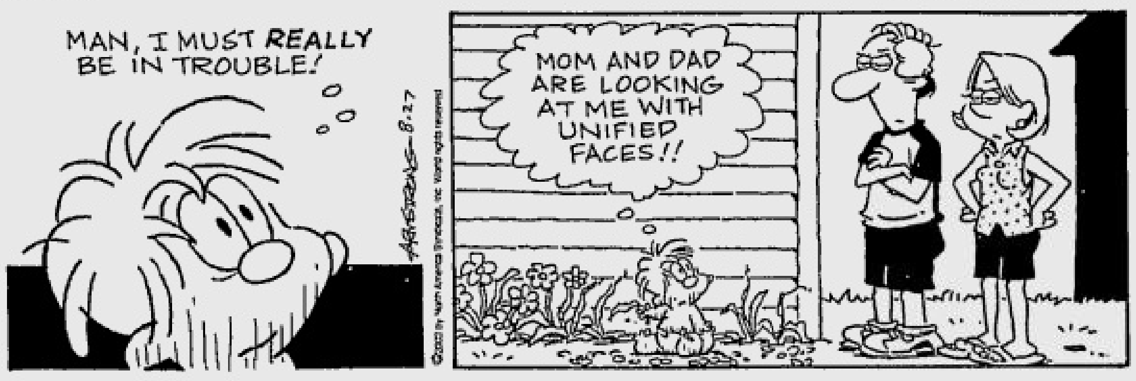

THINK ABOUT WHAT THIS INK OUTAGE MEANS, JASON!
NO BACKGROUNDS!... NO REFRIGERATOR!... NO FOOD!... WE'LL STARVE!
WE HAVE NO MOUTHS, PETER.
OK, GOOD POINT.

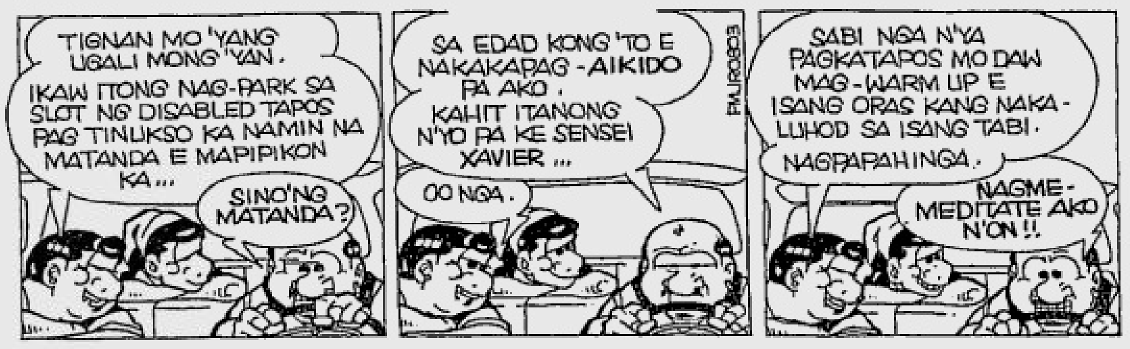
A. LIPIN BY JESS ABRERA


O... BAKIT KA NAMUMUTLA, MON?!
HA?
NATAKOT KA KAY PING KASI PADUDUGUIN ANG ILONG MO SA SUNTOK
HINDE
SINABUYAN N'YA AKO NG FACE POWDER!
KAYA PALA NAWALA ANG FACE MO

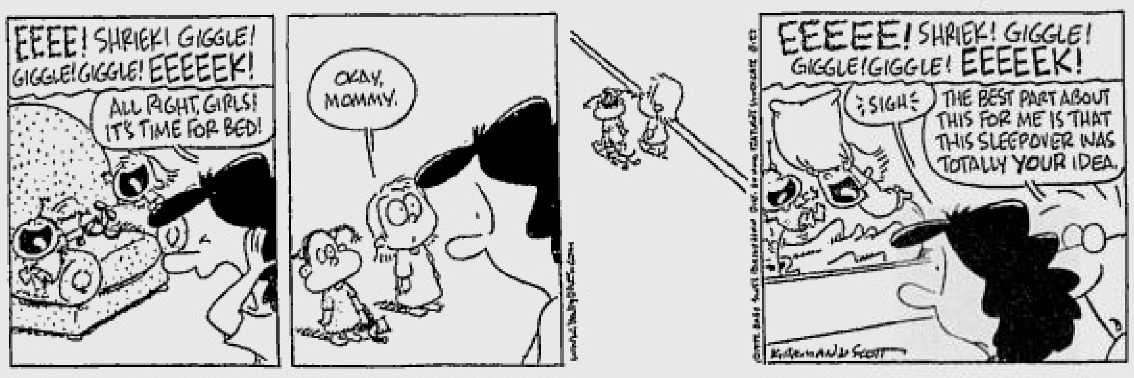
MARVIN BY TOM ARMSTRONG


MAN, I MUST REALLY BE IN TROUBLE!
MOM AND DAD ARE LOOKING AT ME WITH UNIFIED FACES!!

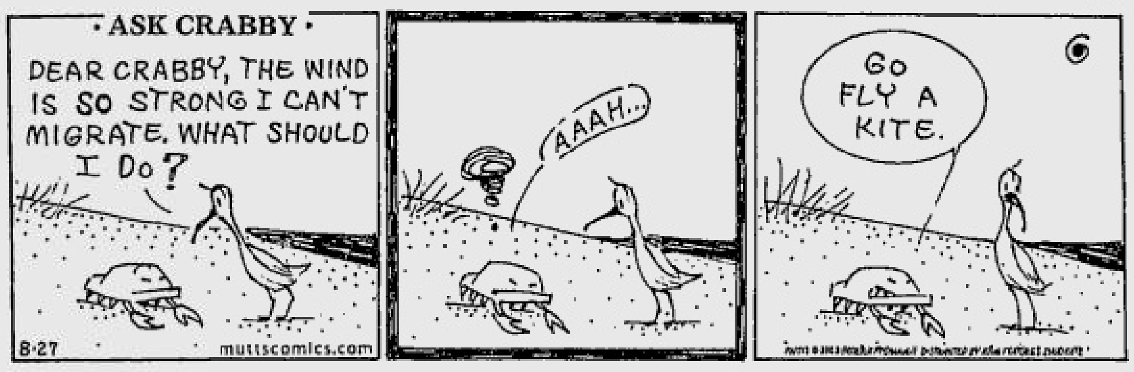
PUGAD BABOY BY P.M. JUNIOR


TIGNAN MO 'YANG UGALI MONG 'YAN.
IKAW ITONG NAG-PARK SA SLOT NG DISABLED TAPOS PAG TINUKSO KA NAMIN NA MATANDA E MAPIPIKON KA...
SINO'NG MATANDA?
SA EDAD KONG 'TO E NAKAKAPAG-AIKIDO PA AKO.
KAHIT ITANONG N'YO PA KE SENSEI XAVIER ...
OO NGA.
SABI NGA N'YA PAGKATAPOS MO DAW MAG-WARM UP E ISANG ORAS KANG NAKALUHOD SA ISANG TABI.
NAGPAPAHINGA.
NAGMEMEDITATE AKO N'ON!!

BABY BLUES BY JERRY SCOTT


EEEE! SHRIEK! GIGGLE! GIGGLE! GIGGLE! EEEEEK!
ALL RIGHT, GIRLS! IT'S TIME FOR BED!
OKAY, MOMMY.
EEEEE! SHRIEK! GIGGLE! GIGGLE! GIGGLE! EEEEEK!
SIGH
THE BEST PART ABOUT THIS FOR ME IS THAT THIS SLEEPOVER WAS TOTALLY YOUR IDEA.

MUTTS BY PATRICK McDONNELL


ASK CRABBY
DEAR CRABBY, THE WIND IS SO STRONG I CAN'T MIGRATE. WHAT SHOULD I DO?
AAAH...
GO FLY A KITE.
8-27
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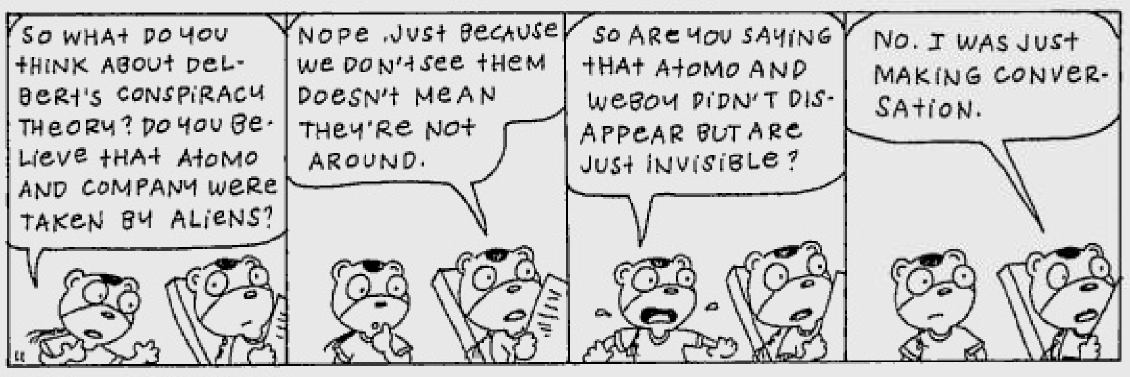
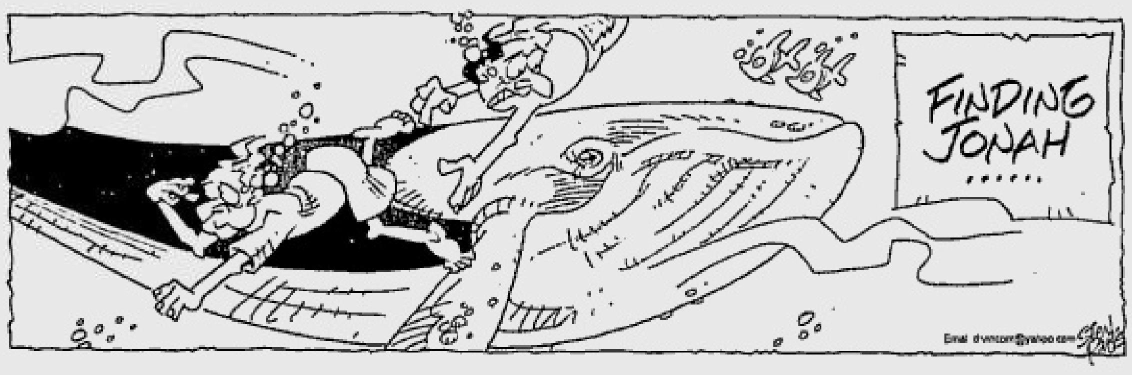
ATOMO AND WEBOY BY LYRA GARCELLANO


SO WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT DELBERT'S CONSPIRACY THEORY? DO YOU BELIEVE THAT ATOMO AND COMPANY WERE TAKEN BY ALIENS?
NOPE. JUST BECAUSE WE DON'T SEE THEM DOESN'T MEAN THEY'RE NOT AROUND.
SO ARE YOU SAYING THAT ATOMO AND WEBOY DIDN'T DISAPPEAR BUT ARE JUST INVISIBLE?
NO. I WAS JUST MAKING CONVERSATION.

DIVINE COMEDY BY STEVEN PABALINAS


FINDING JONAH ......

HOROSCOPE

BY FRANCIS DRAKE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are naturally caring and idealistic. Furthermore, you easily see the bigger picture, and this makes you socially aware. Essentially, you want to make the world a better place. You value your principles, but you are also practical. That's why you can make a difference. Work hard this year for rewards to come.
Birthdate of: Ira Levin, screenwriter; Mother Teresa, missionary/Nobel Peace Prize winner; C.S. Forester, writer.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): It's important to think about how you can organize your life better both at work and at home. At the same time, think about how you can improve your health through exercise and what you eat.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): Everything having to do with love affairs and romance has your strong attention now. You want to go on a vacation or just enjoy yourself somehow. You need to play!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Today's New Moon offers you an opportunity to think about how to make improvements at home or within your family dynamic. What can you do to improve things?

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): Be clear in all your communications with others today and in the next few weeks. Discussions with siblings and relatives are especially important now.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Today's New Moon urges you to get on top of your financial situation. Figure out what you have and do not have. Be realistic. You might need to curb your spending. (What's new?)

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Five planets are in your sign today! The world is having a Virgo moment. That's why you feel powerful and energized. Do something positive with this extra oomph!

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): It's very important that you allow yourself some time alone to sort through ideas. Solitude in beautiful surroundings will definitely benefit you now. Obviously, this is not always easy to achieve.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): Discussions with a female friend are important today. In fact, networking with others can improve your job or bring money and possessions your way.

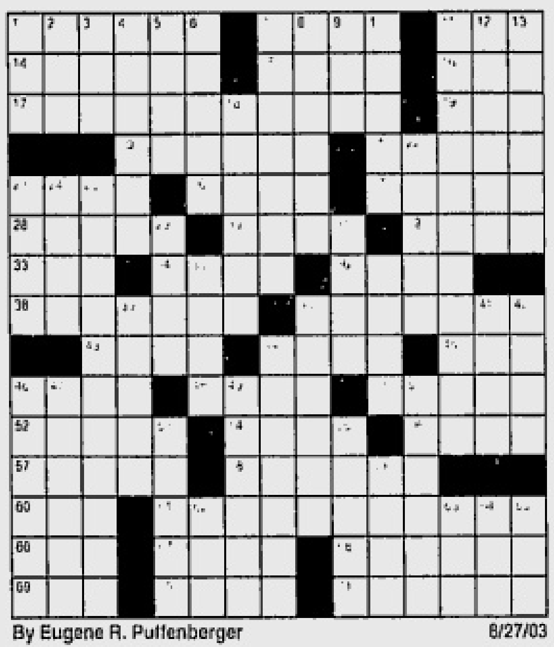
SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Five heavenly bodies (including today's New Moon) are at high noon in your chart. People notice you now! You have an important job to do.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): Your desire to escape somewhere is strong now. You want to blow this pop stand. You need a change of scenery, because your sense of adventure is charged.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Expect to focus on the wealth and possessions of others now. Essentially, you have to come to terms with values that are different from yours. (Not easy.)

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): You have much to learn from a close friend or partner now. Make sure you are listening more than you are talking. You can't pour coffee into a full cup.

DAILY CROSSWORD

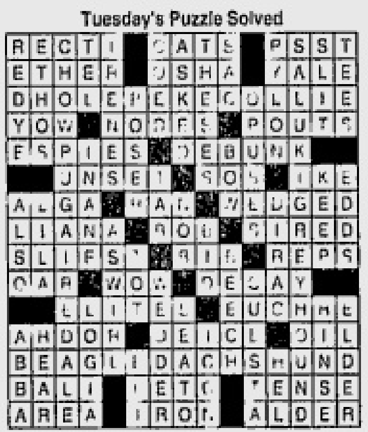


By Eugene R. Puffenberger
Houston, TX
8/27/03

ACROSS
1 Spiritual music
7 Short erect tail
11 Entrepreneur-aiding grp.
14 Pulse location
15 "Dies __" (day of wrath)
16 Soft metal
17 Dallas paper
19 Slice of a circle
20 Household
21 "Key __"
23 Biggest Bear?
26 Planter spot
27 Gomez Addams on TV
28 "Dream _ _ with me..."
30 Roaring Twenties crimefighter
32 Mlle. from Madrid
33 Mayday!
34 Filled with reverence
36 Siamese
38 Colonist
40 Dobbin's lunch pail?
43 Target
44 Novelist Amelia
45 Coffee server
46 To a distance
48 Pairs
50 Stoppage of breathing
52 Shaver
54 Coll. mil. prog.
56 Resting spot
57 Actress Witherspoon
58 Inhalation
60 Morsel of food
61 Cleveland paper
66 Jester
67 Telescope part
68 Upgrade the circuitry
69 Understand
70 You got it!
71 Followed

DOWN
1 Actress Rita
2 Acapulco gold
3 Narrow ocean passage: abbr.
4 Scribe
5 Sandusky's lake
6 Swann and Redgrave
7 Got a one-base hit
8 Angler's baskets
9 Walter Reuther's grp.
10 Inventor Nikola
11 Minneapolis paper
12 Soprano Nilsson
13 Adriatic port
18 Reverse dive
22 Syrian leader
23 Overtake
24 Lotion ingredient
25 Pittsburgh paper
29 Jamboree
31 Spin follower
35 Tuesday in film
37 Queen of Olympus
39 Spanish bulls
40 Secure
41 Vicinity
42 Insect pest
44 Uncouth
46 Archer's ammo
47 "The __ Queene"
49 Champaign-__ IL
51 Impatient interjections
53 Answer
55 Core group
59 Adolescent
62 Spike or Peggy
63 NY school
64 Afore
65 Primary color

Tuesday's Puzzle Solved



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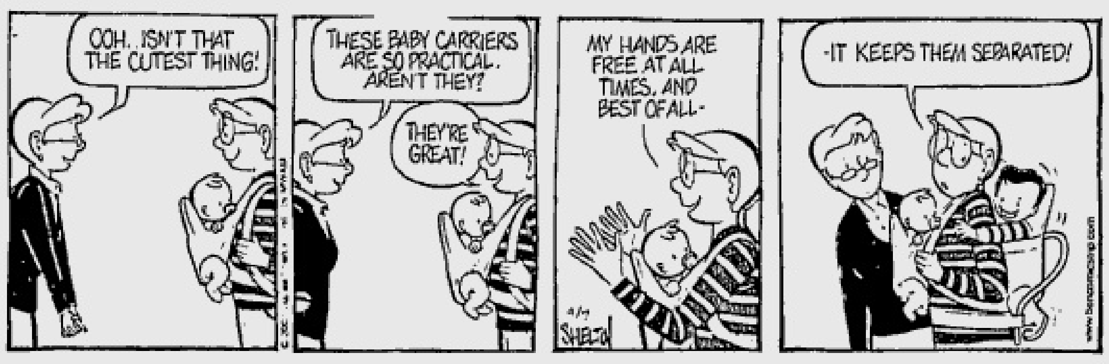
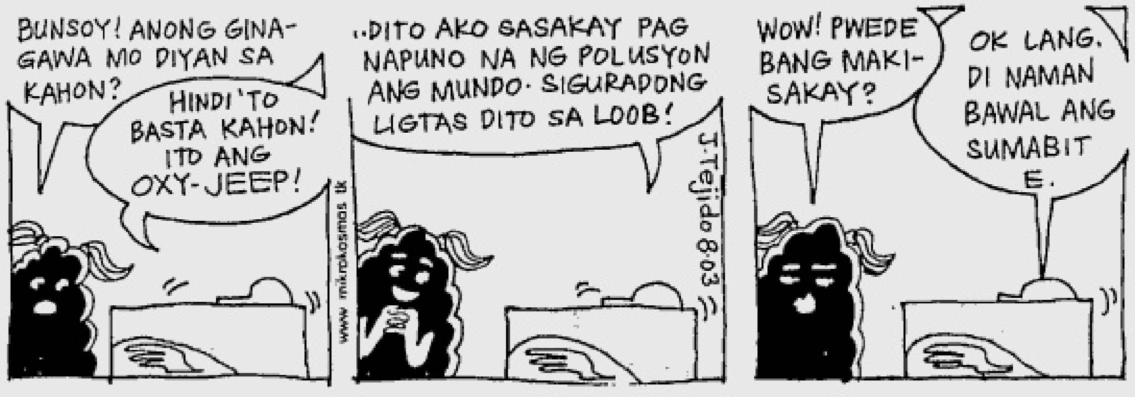
8/27/03

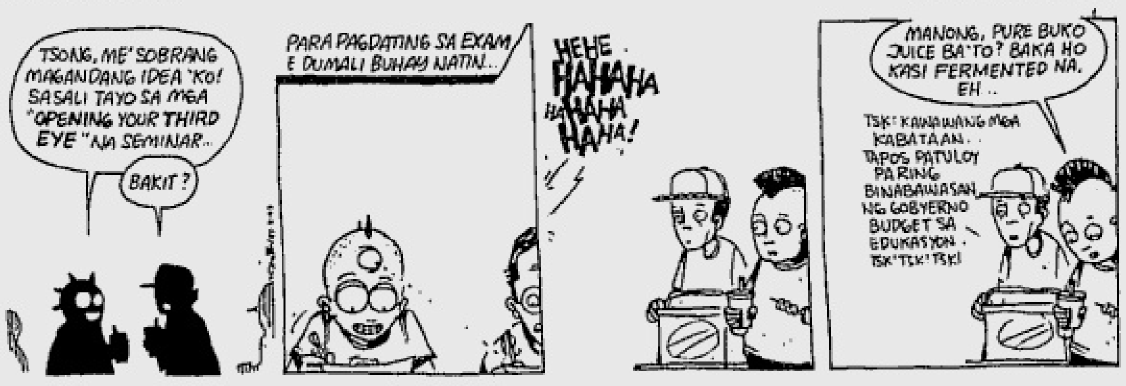
BEN BY DANIEL SHELTON


OOH. ISN'T THAT THE CUTEST THING!
THESE BABY CARRIERS ARE SO PRACTICAL. AREN'T THEY?
THEY'RE GREAT!
MY HANDS ARE FREE AT ALL TIMES, AND BEST OF ALL-
-IT KEEPS THEM SEPARATED!

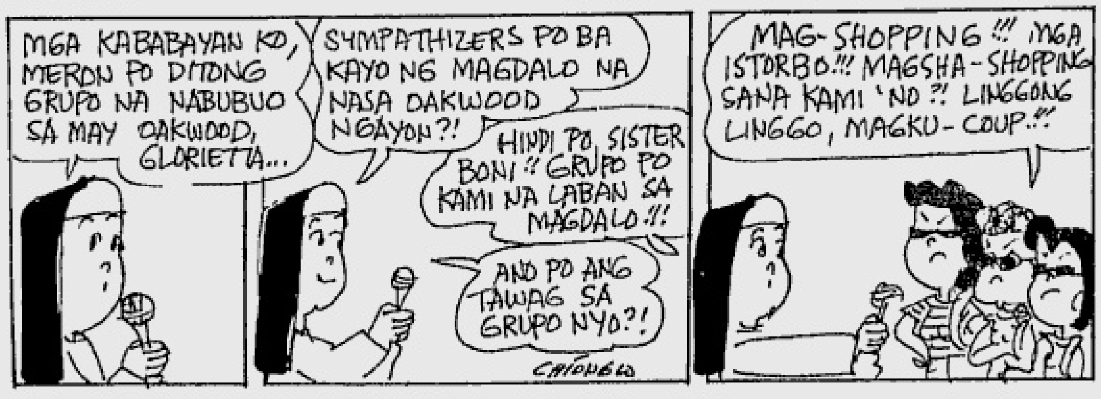
MIKROKOSMOS BY JOMIKE TEJIDO


BUNSOY! ANONG GINAGAWA MO DIYAN SA KAHON?
HINDI 'TO BASTA KAHON! ITO ANG OXY-JEEP!
..DITO AKO SASAKAY PAG NAPUNO NA NG POLUSYON ANG MUNDO. SIGURADONG LIGTAS DITO SA LOOB!
www.mikrokosmos.tk
J.Tejido 8.03
WOW! PWEDE BANG MAKISAKAY?
OK LANG. DI NAMAN BAWAL ANG SUMABIT E.

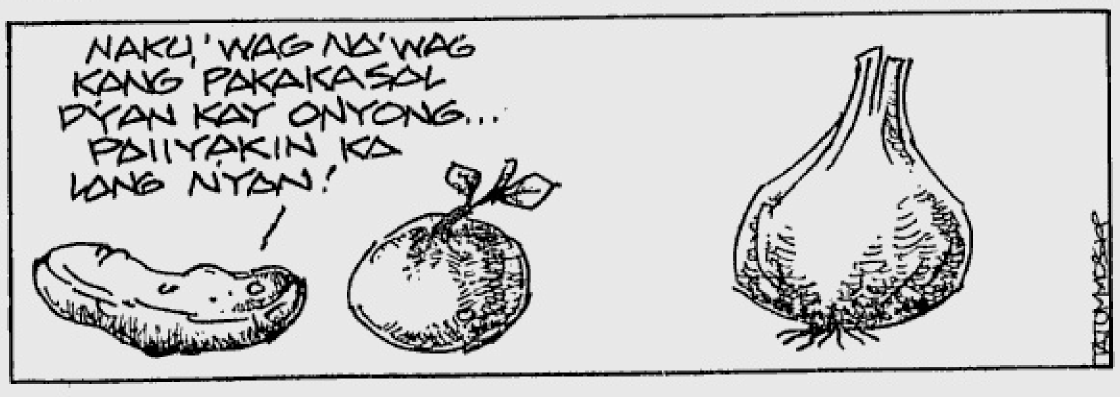
KIKO MACHINE BY MANIX ABRERA


TSONG, ME' SOBRANG MAGANDANG IDEA 'KO! SASALI TAYO SA MGA "OPENING YOUR THIRD EYE" NA SEMINAR..
BAKIT?
PARA PAGDATING SA EXAM E DUMALI BUHAY NATIN..
HEHE. HAHAHA HAHAHA HAHA!
MANONG, PURE BUKO JUICE BA 'TO? BAKA HO KASI FERMENTED NA, EH..
TSK! KAWAWANG MGA KABATAAN.. TAPOS PATULOY PA RING BINABAWASAN NG GOBYERNO BUDGET SA EDUKASYON. TSK' TSK! TSK!

LOVEKNOTS BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


MGA KABABAYAN KO, MERON PO DITONG GRUPO NA NABUBUO SA MAY OAKWOOD, GLORIETTA...
SYMPATHIZERS PO BA KAYO NG MAGDALO NA NASA OAKWOOD NGAYON?!
HINDI PO, SISTER BONI!! GRUPO PO KAMI NA LABAN SA MAGDALO!!
ANO PO ANG TAWAG SA GRUPO NYO?!
CHIONGLO
MAG-SHOPPING!!! MGA ISTORBO!!! MAGSHA-SHOPPING SANA KAMI 'NO?! LINGGONG LINGGO, MAGKU-COUP..!!

TULDOK BY PAPU AND TATUM MILAMBILING


NAKU, 'WAG NA 'WAG KANG PAKAKASAL D'YAN KAY ONYONG... PAIIYAKIN KA LANG NYAN!
TATUM

TELLY WEEKLY

More idols, more MTV and more Kuya Germs

By Niño Mark M. Sablan
2bU! Correspondent

MTV has always been a pioneer in the music and television industries. Aside from groundbreaking programs like "MTV Unplugged" and "MTV Becoming," the music channel has recently added a bunch of new shows for our regular viewing.

"Dismissed" is a new take on the usual dating game. It involves a love triangle and subscribes to the adage "three is a crowd," with one unfortunate heart eventually getting broken.

Another new show is "Punk'd," a practical jokes and pranks show hosted by Ashton Kutcher whose task is to pull pranks on unsuspecting fellow celebs.

Yet another new program from MTV is "Duets," where one very lucky fan gets to meet an admired musical celebrity and perform a duet with him or her. For schedules, tune in to MTV.

Real entertainment

One of the most entertaining midnight shows on Pinoy TV is Kuya Germs' "Master Showman." Seen on Saturdays, around midnight or usually a little after that, it is a show that boasts of surprising guests, unique presentations and a bevy of unknown yet entertaining personalities .

So the next weekend that you're gimmick-less and bored, give the show a peek and discover what you've been missing all your life. Who knows, you might start reserving your Saturday nights for *walang… tulugan*!

Cable gem

"Meteor Garden" may be the hottest Asian import in the Philippines right now, but there's another youth program that's been clicking with many cable viewers.

Arirang, a Korean channel, has a sitcom called "Nonstop" which is about a bunch of teenagers going through the complexities of teenage life. But unlike most teen shows in our country, "Nonstop" is basically humor-filled. Think of it as a Korean version of "Friends," .only with more people and younger ones at that.

With its crazy storylines, creative editing and witty dialogues, "Nonstop" may not be as huge as "Meteor Garden," but it's yet another great program from another neighbor.

Entertaining ads

The Alaxan FR commercial has got to be the scariest one around, thanks to its superb visual effects. It features a shoe saleslady who looks like Krista Ranillo entertaining a lot of demanding customers. Stressed out by the chaos going on, the Krista look-alike's temper reaches boiling point and lashes out at a poor, inquiring customer.

Reminiscent of a certain scene with Bilbo Baggins in "The Lord of the Rings," this particular ad concept is already the second one for the same product brand.

The Doublemint gum commercial has also been getting a lot of great feedback, and it has so much recall that GMA 7's Bubble Gang even spoofed it. Undoubtedly funny, it suggests that chewing mint gum is the temporary solution for those cursed with halitosis.

Everybody knows that good breath starts with good oral hygiene and that aside from brushing properly, using good toothpaste is a must. This is the message of the latest Unique toothpaste commercial, which shows a couple reuniting in the airport with a kiss.

The poor lady faints, the guy checks his breath, and we all die of laughter. Conservatives have observed that the kiss was a tad too torrid, and it seems the people behind the ad have responded to the complaint by editing out the last portion of the commercial, where the guy (who has just brushed his teeth using Unique toothpaste) once again gets to lock lips with his wife.

Vidiot box

The newcomers have arrived! Their names may ring no bells and their songs may not be catchy enough to make you tap your feet or snap your fingers, but beware, because they are surely working their way to the top of those music charts.

There's the new female quintet from the UK called Girls Aloud, R&B singer Lumidee who looks like Radha in certain angles, Delta Goodrem and her piano, Kym Marsh and her catchy single "Cry" and that new girl on "MTV Alert" who looks good but sounds annoying. Oh, and her video is something too.

April Boy Regino may be out of the spotlight, but there are other idols enjoying the limelight. Fresh from their victory in international singing contests, these guys are getting ready for the whole world.

There's "American Idol" Kelly Clarkson (who looks like Danica Sotto and Jennifer Aniston) with her first video, "Miss Independent."

Darius and his luscious lips are currently out with a black and white vid. Garreth Gates (the kid with the huge gap between his two front teeth) and proudly gay Will Young have also released covers.

E-mail the author at katotino@yahoo.com

'Up there' for the first time

By Arlene M. Paredes
2bU! Correspondent

"WHEN you meet mountaineers along the way, greet them 'good morning' or 'good afternoon' and call them 'sir' or 'ma'am.' Always be polite."

This was the first rule that our guide told us before we set forth on our three-hour trek to Pico de Loro, the highest peak in the province of Cavite at 664 meters above sea level. The mountain borders the provinces of Cavite and Batangas in the towns of Ternate and Nasugbu, respectively.

Pico de Loro is basically a "minor climb," most suited for beginners like me. But for someone who has never been fond of sports and outdoor activities, climbing was a completely frightening new adventure.

My friend Nap had asked me over and over again if I was sure I wanted to join him and his friends, because he didn't want me to chicken out in the middle of the trip. Naturally, I insisted I could do it, and I was sure I wouldn't be a "burden."

I didn't tell Nap, though, that I wanted to go because I knew that no matter what happened, he would take good care of me. I wouldn't have dared to try mountain-climbing if I wasn't with a friend. Nap later wound up carrying my bag along with his stuff.

True enough, Nap took good care of me especially during the the last crucial 10 minutes of the climb to the peak. The hill was extremely rocky and narrow. I couldn't look down for fear that my hands would shake and lose grip of the rocks.

"You'll either fall in Cavite or in Batangas. But the better choice is not to fall!" The other climbers said.

My knees were trembling really hard as I worked up the remaining distance to the peak. What kept me going was Nap's words, saying, "Arlene, sunset! Think of the sunset!"

Yeah, all the efforts would amount to nothing if I failed to catch it, and it was already a few minutes before 6 p.m.!

Finally, I got the best part of my first climb: Catching the spectacular view of sunset from the peak. And since Pico de Loro offers a breathtaking 360-degree panoramic view of the provinces of Cavite and Batangas, there was a lot more to see.

Tadpole-shaped Corregidor Island was also clearly visible, as well as Manila Bay and Puerto Azul. We were told that during the Japanese occupation, Pico de Loro was used as an observation post because of its strategic location.

A three-man team of climbers we met along the way, who reached the peak first, told us we were lucky because it wasn't foggy. The first time they climbed Pico de Loro (this was their second time), they failed to watch the sunset because of the fog, but they stayed overnight. That's how they saw the equally amazing view of sunrise from the peak.

Meeting fellow climbers was the next best part of the new experience. During our chat with the "professional climbers," we laughed at how we could be so polite up in the mountains, greeting "Good morning, sir" or "Good morning, ma'am" when we act way differently in our respective urban settings.

Perhaps, we thought, respect has a lot to do with it. Perhaps climbers respect each other as they have a common goal: To reach the peak and overcome challenges along the way.

Sa gitna ng lahat, may
EQ Dry
Soft Spot

Experience the comfy softness of NEW EQ Dry with cloth-like cover.
Visit the EQ Dry Soft Spot Activity Center in selected malls
and take advantage of the following:

EQ Dry Soft Kit containing 1 EQ Dry baby diaper, a baby pillow, and a picture card featuring you and your baby! (Get this when you present EQ Dry baby diaper wrappers.)

FREE derma consultation for baby

Relax and watch videos at the Soft Spot Lounge

Play games and take home lots of special prizes at the Game Booths

PLUS! Bring EQ Dry wrappers and exchange them
for premium items like baby bags, stuffed toys and more!

TOUR DATES

Robinson's Ermita (Aug. 15-17) • SM Fairview (Aug. 22-24) • SM Bacoor (Aug. 29-31) • SM Megamall (Sept. 5-7)
SM Southmall (Sept. 12-14) • Sta. Lucia Mall (Sept. 19-21) • SM Pampanga (Sept. 26-28) • SM North EDSA (Oct. 3-5)
Bay Citimall Batangas (Oct. 10-12) • SM Iloilo (Oct. 24-26) • Robinson's Bacolod (Nov. 7-9) • SM Cebu (Nov. 21-23)

For more information, log on to www.evei.com.ph

EQ Dry. Di kailangang mahal ang pagmamahal.

STORE OF THE WEEK

WEAR CATWALK STYLE ON THE STREET

By Margot Aissa C. Tan
2bU! Correspondent

FACT: Trendy clothes don't need to be different and strange. You can be sassy and comfortable without causing raised eyebrows. Just step into one of People are People's friendly branches.

The store carries a good collection of clothes, shoes, bags and great accessories that are stylish, playful and spirited. The items can be quite atypical but still totally wearable. You can bring style out of the catwalk and into the streets.

Good buys include a pair of jeans with stripes on both sides (P949), and a seriously jaw-dropping, tan cowl-neck top (P549). It's backless and brave, sexy but elegant.

A pair of platform thongs from Hot Chili is available at a steep price of P3,399, but all in all, you'd end up with a casual but striking look that's good for clubbing and Friday night gimmicks.

The less daring and sporty should check out the pink mesh camisole which goes with a bright yellow top that spells Miami. For only P499, it's definitely a good buy as you can mix and match it with old stuff in your wardrobe.

If you're tired of seeing everyone else routinely wearing their jeans with their Prestos, you could go for People are People's Acupuncture line of rubber shoes. Check out a cute pair with embroidered oriental design that will surely tickle your fancy.

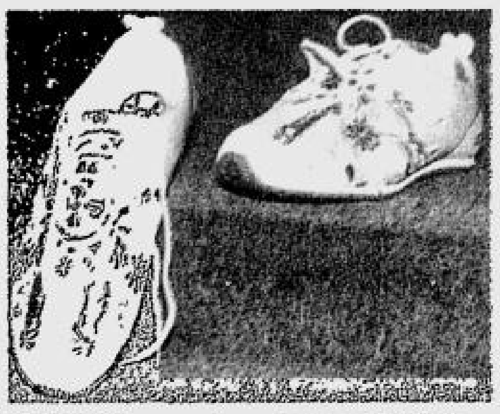
People are People carries clothes that are quite atypical but still totally wearable

SASSY doesn't have to be uncomfortable.

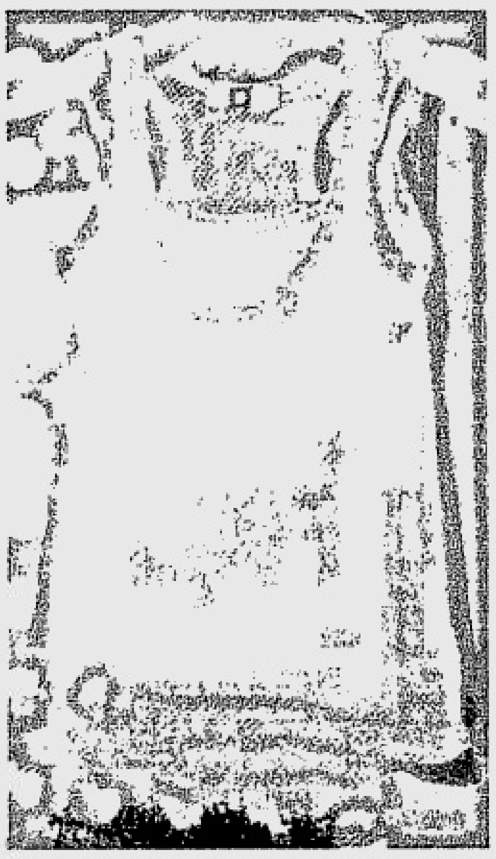
Rules of the game? Don't be afraid to try something different. Reinvent yourself from time to time and see how refreshing changes in personal style can be.

You could move from being simple but formal to bubbly and casual whenever you feel like it. Just make sure that whatever you wear reflects your outlook and your personality. As the store's name says, people are people. All you have to do to stand out in a crowd is to be true to yourself and to be real.

E-mail the author at magsygirl@hotmail.com



FORGET the generic sneakers and slip into these babies.



SHOW off those toned arms with this layered top.

Smitten by taken men

Niño Mark Sablan
& September Mabino

DEAR Mark and Sep,

I am 35, single, and I work as a cashier in a bank. I was just wondering why married men are more attractive than single ones. I had five boyfriends before, and four of them were married. As of now, I have a boyfriend who is married and with four children, a vice president of one of the biggest agricultural companies in our country. Our relationship has been going on for more than two years now.

I have a suitor who is willing to marry me in spite of my past and current affair. He's two years younger than me, but he is financially stable. But every time I try to avoid communication with my boyfriend, I feel restless; I always get hurt. I love him so much. He is the one who makes me feel complete.

He also doesn't want to lose me, but sometimes, I feel that I need a family of my own. I am not getting any younger, and in the right time, I want to settle down.

MISS TAURUS

Maybe it's just because you know you can't totally have them. Maybe it's just because it will be really fulfilling if you successfully steal them from their wives. Whatever reason you have for being attracted to taken guys, I'm sure there are truckloads of reasons for you to be attracted to or even fall in love with single, unattached males.

I'm sure that the two years you've spent together, you were able to know Mr. Married more and fall deeper for him. But go ahead and think of all his unforgivable shortcomings. Make a list of all the things you don't like about your so-called relationship, like his lack of time for you or how he treats you as his second choice. Collect all these complaints and realize how you won't have to suffer from all these, if only you were with someone who doesn't have a family.

You don't have to go for your suitor just because he's the first single guy to surface. Make sure that you will opt for someone who can make you happy and complete. Someone who can make you realize that he can offer you things Mr. Married can't.

Sure, your hitched boyfriend tickles you pink, but if you know that a family can make you even happier and he can't give this to you, go hunt for someone who can. You alone can gauge what can make you happier. You alone can make decisions that will hopefully bring you the happiness you want.

MARK

While it is good that you have recognized a glaring pattern in your romantic preferences, at 35, that is simply not enough. Let's look past all the moralistic arguments against your acts and focus, instead, on you.

Ms Taurus, wondering why you fall more for married men is too twentysomething-ish and a little too irresponsible for your situation. After four relationships with already-committed men, don't you think it's time that you make an effort to change in order to avoid making the same mistakes? It is surely wonderful to be in love and be with someone, but if it is at the expense of another woman, then you just come off as selfish and immature, no matter how much you really love the guy. Especially if you've done that four times.

You have said that you'd like to settle down, too, someday. While I am not always a great believer of karma, think how you'll feel if you have a husband and he'll fool around with another chick, whose only reason is that she can't help falling in love with him. How will you take that? Now, before you really get a chance to have a taste of your own medicine, get off that I-fall-for-married-men state of mind and change, for goodness' sake. Married men may give you thrills, but thrills can never be enough and, as you've admitted, you like something more stable, more free and more yours in the right time.

Well, there's no more right time than now, so break off your relationship with your fifth womanizer and be more open to the single guys who also like you. Whenever you feel restlessness and pain after doing that, just think of the pain that you've inflicted on all your ex-boyfriends' wives and let your conscience shut all those self-indulgent voices up.

SEPTEMBER

E-mail the authors at markandsep@yahoo.com

SM Appliance Center
citibank
0% interest ON EVERYTHING!*
on 3, 6 or 12-month installment plan for a minimum purchase of P3,000
installment festival
wider appliance selection
SM City FAIRVIEW SM City CEBU
Aug. 27 to Sept. 7
PayLite INSTALLMENT PLAN
Plus, enjoy Lower Than Cash Price on selected items!
(Below 0% Interest on the 6-month Installment plan)
Per DTI-NCR Permit No.2249 Series of 2003
*As approved by DTI-NCR
SM CITY NORTH EDSA 9279335 • NORTH EDSA ANNEX 9276578 • NORTH EDSA BASEMENT 9272650 • SM MAKATI 8161178 • HARRISON PLAZA 5246239 • SM CUBAO 9111159 • SM MEGAMALL 6335075 • SM CENTERPOINT 7150534 • SM SOUTHMALL 8003512 • SM CITY BACOOR (046) 4170258 • SM CITY FAIRVIEW 4176795 • SM CITY CEBU (032) 2319132 • SM DELGADO (033) 3373102 • SM CITY MANILA 5238593 • SM CITY PAMPANGA (045) 9616991 • SUCAT 8297346 • SM CITY ILOILO (033) 320-6355 • SM CITY DAVAO (082) 2977064 • ROCKWELL 8981519 • PODIUM 6871215 • SM BICUTAN 7779295 • SM CITY CAGAYAN DE ORO (088) 8592501